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**THE**  
**FINE AND ORNAMENTAL ARTS.**

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THE  
FINE AND ORNAMENTAL ARTS.

LONDON : PRINTED BY  
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AND PARLIAMENT STREET





SUPPOSED EARLIEST REMAINING HEAD OF CHRIST.

A Mosaic found in the Catacomb of St. Calixtus.

*From Bottari, Sculp. e Pittur. &c. T. 2, tav. 70.*

HALF-HOUR LECTURES  
ON THE  
HISTORY AND PRACTICE  
OF THE  
FINE AND ORNAMENTAL ARTS.

BY  
WILLIAM B. SCOTT,

ASSISTANT INSPECTOR IN ART, DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART:  
AUTHOR OF 'MEMOIR OF DAVID SCOTT, R.S.A.'  
'LIFE OF ALBERT DÜRER' ETC.

THIRD EDITION, REVISED BY THE AUTHOR



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*DEDICATORY PREFACE.*

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TO

SIR W. CALVERLEY TREVELYAN, BARONET,

OF NETTLECOMBE AND WALLINGTON.

MY DEAR SIR WALTER,

Allow me to have the honour and the satisfaction of inscribing to you the following series of papers. Written as they were originally for students in the Arts, and delivered to them, it was necessary to recount some matters sufficiently well known to the initiated; it was desirable also to give a popular, though not necessarily a superficial, character to the Lectures. Short though they are, they represent an attempt to review the entire story of the Fine and Ornamental Arts since the commencement of our era: a sufficiently varied and voluminous subject, exhibited in detail by so many large works published within a few years by MM. Perret, Lasteyrie, Agincourt, Didron and Durand, Martin and Cahier, Lacroix and Séré, whose large work has

been republished in sections since our first edition appeared, Denis, De Laborde, Labarte, Kugler, &c., abroad; and at home by Henry Shaw, Sir C. Eastlake, Sir G. Wilkinson, Messieurs Marryat, Parker of Oxford, Digby Wyatt, Owen Jones, Winston, Boutell, Scrivenor, Wornum, &c.—all of whom I have considered as generally reliable authorities for facts and details.

The last three Lectures are not historical, but relate to the ideas which constitute the subjective basis of all Art, or to the critical form in which those ideas have been expressed. They have required careful consideration; I hope you will not find them the least important.

My dear SIR WALTER,

I remain

Your very much obliged and faithful servant,

WILLIAM B. SCOTT.

*January 1861.*

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# HALF-HOUR LECTURES ON ART.

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## LECTURE I.

THE CHRISTIAN ERA.—ART IN ROME.—POMPEII.—COMMENCEMENT  
OF CHRISTIAN ART IN THE CATACOMBS.

WHATEVER touches us most deeply in the forms or motives of Art dates no further back than that epoch in the history of the world when the great and wonderful change began from Paganism to Christianity, from philosophy to revelation, from sensuous refinement to moral self-abnegation. When we pass beyond our own era, we enter an atmosphere foreign to modern vital principles; we cannot live in it—we may only indulge in it; it affects us intellectually, not feelingly. The fundamental ideas of the ancient artists are not ours, their habits have no interest to us; we cannot help thinking of them as having lived abstractedly from sympathies and passions, cold and deaf to human cares and enjoyments. And the truth is, that the moral and spiritual equality of mankind and womankind, the unity of the

human family, the duty of self-denial and mutual helpfulness, —all that we love and respect in the character of the good man—was at the epoch of the change for the first time put into popular words and promulgated to the people.

I propose, therefore—more especially as you will find ancient art and architecture, whose transcendent excellences will always justly claim great study, the favourite topics in text-books and cyclopædias—to begin at our era in sketching the history of the various fine and ornamental arts most conspicuous in our civilisation. We shall see a steady decline with the fall of the old religion and the breaking up of the Roman power, but even in the lowest debasement we shall find a new and more promising development began in various departments. The arts become more varied, growing out of a richer basis of civilisation, and extend over a wider field.

A century and a half before the Advent the power of Rome ceased to have any barrier. Carthage, its African rival, then fell, and was for ever extinguished, and the same year Corinth was sacked, as Rhodes had been a few years before. Greece, with all its learning and stores of art, now belonged to the conqueror; and Egypt contributed its unwieldy monuments and strange gods to the forum and pantheon of the central city. The accumulation became something wonderful. Long before this, Etruria had been pillaged, and the works so imported formed the only art then known in Rome; now all the treasures of the previous civilisation of the world were there united. The greater part of the works of the schools of Greece, Asia Minor, and Alexandria, was carried thither by shiploads, till the number of marble statues was said to equal that of the city's living inhabitants. The wealth of the greater families grew with that of the state. They had hundreds—some of them



thousands—of slaves, in great part originally captives, living in their palaces, which covered acres of ground. The descriptions of the splendour of living and luxurious tastes of some of the leaders of fashion—such as Lucullus or Mæcenas—show their daily tables to have been equal to our great public banquets. The first of these two patricians, for example, had various triclinia or dining apartments, and his servants knew what preparations to make by being informed which of them he meant that day to occupy. In one of these it was believed he never gave an entertainment but on a scale of expense equal to 1600*l.* in English value.

The painting, sculpture, and furniture of these palaces were either spoils of foreign states, or the imitative work of the slave, who was now educated in the arts and sciences, nearly every trade and occupation being followed by the inhabitants collectively of each great mansion. Sensual luxury has really little sympathy with the arts. Cushions covered by gold nets and supported on ivory, tortoise-shell, and beaten gold, braziers of perfumes costing fabulous sums, and the mosaics of the floor hidden by sweet-scented vermilion powder, do not therefore concern us much; nor do the athletes who fought, nor the dancing girls who spun round before the guests to the tender sounds of little musical instruments.

Such being the way of life of a private patrician, the aspiration of the citizen, and the hungering and thirsting of the freedman, may be easily supposed to have been towards some share of the same luxury. The emperors therefore made themselves national favourites by building immense structures for public recreation and amusement, as well as others for useful purposes. Theatres and amphitheatres, equal nearly to the accommodation of the whole privileged population, baths of vast extent and splendour in which

thousands spent the day, as well as forums for public assembly, and gardens, increased with successive rulers. Spectacles were sought after: triumphs decorated by herds of noble wild men and women from far countries, with waggons loaded with gold and silver, idols, and models of vanquished cities, passed through the streets; shows of gladiators who died amidst the shouts of female as well as of male voices, or lions and leopards ferocious through starvation, pitted against each other, or sent in among innocent animals such as fawns and zebras, drew crowds together at certain seasons. Such habits and amusements suggested to Nero his Golden House, and his attempt to amuse the populace by lighting them at night by human creatures wrapped up in pitch; they made him the murderer of his mother, and at the same time one of the best musicians of his time, a poet, and a sort of adventurer in painting too, as he had a portrait of himself exhibited on wood and canvas 120 feet high. What this effigy really was, it is now difficult to say, but it seems certain such a fabric was made. In a few years not only it, but the Golden House itself and the infamous gardens, had ceased to exist, and in their place rose the Baths of Titus, built about the year A.D. 80, notable as having been exhumed in the heyday of the renaissance, when the group of the *Laocoön* was found standing in its ancient place (not in the baths, as has been often said, but in the neighbourhood); and the broken walls exhibited those decorations that Raphael and his school so admired and perpetuated in the loggie of the Vatican and elsewhere. Twenty years later, about 100 of our era, the forum of Trajan was added on the same site, the structure perhaps of all others most illustrative of Roman architecture, but of which little now remains, except the sculptured column of Trajan which occupied the centre, and some portions of the frieze now used as models

in our schools of art, exhibiting the richest and boldest acanthus ornamentation, and the free introduction of monsters and cupids ending in foliage, foreign to the spirit of good Greek art. Close by stood the Colosseum, then lately opened to the people, a labour of building almost equalling the pyramids in extent; before the completion of which, wooden structures were raised for extraordinary exhibitions. Tacitus relates the falling of one of these, by which 50,000 people were injured, many being killed. Imagine the scene! The victims in the arena pausing in their fearful play of death, while the vast spheres of timber were crashing and sinking around them with their loads of struggling humanity—they in their turn becoming spectators.

The Colosseum covered a space little short of six acres, and had it not been wilfully destroyed would have still existed complete. To particularise further the great public works in Rome that belong to this century is not necessary here; but there is one other of peculiar interest standing so near as to be included in views of the Colosseum. The independence of Jerusalem, like that of all other capitals, having been absorbed by the central power, it had been for some time governed as a Roman province. But the Jews, unlike other nations, believed in a prophesied dominion, and depended on peculiar aid from heaven; thus they rebelled again and again, and rushed upon destruction. Moreover their rebellions are said to have been of the cruellest character, so that there was something like retributive justice in the terrible fate of the city and temple, and in the triumph commemorated by the Arch of Titus. On one of the reliefs that decorate the thoroughfare of this structure, we find the sacred candlestick with its seven branches and the table of shewbread, the only representations of anything belonging to the temple now left to us.



The triumphal arches, of which this is a good example, may be considered the most characteristic illustrations of Roman architecture, at least of that straining after invention, despite the fixed principles of a style, which subordinated construction to ornamentation, reversing the natural order of things. 'Few remarks,' says Mr. Wornum, 'will suffice to show how the Roman, with its abundance of materials, was still a period of decline. It was the wrong *use* that was made of these materials. Style and system may be looked upon as synonymous terms in ornamental art. Besides the ornaments themselves we must have some system of applying them. And if the prominent and characteristic members of certain established styles are promiscuously thrown together, the principal feature of one style applied as secondary to subordinate features of another, the value of all is diminished.'

The anecdotes and accidental notices we have in Latin authors relating to painting and its appreciation in this period of power and luxury, are many and characteristic; nearly all showing great ignorance of art. Even Pliny, the principal writer and authority on the subject, writes from an uninitiated point of view. When, on the destruction of Corinth, the Roman general, gathering in heaps the greatest works of Greece to grace the spectacle on his return, laid his hand on the Bacchus and Ariadne by Aristides of Thebes, King Attalus, eager for its redemption, offered him so large a sum for it that he, ignorant of art, suspecting there was some charm or arcanum connected with the picture, refused all terms and dedicated it in the Temple of Ceres. Generals returning from the wars, candidates for civic honours, exhibited in the market-place ostentatious representations of their exploits, sometimes themselves attending and pointing out the features of the pictures. Julius Cæsar, who, strange to say, carried with him in his

campaigns a tessellated pavement for the floor of his tent, hung up the two pictures by Timomachus, Medea and Ajax, in the temple of Venus, in addition to the shield covered with British pearls dedicated on his return from this country. Julius himself, being deified after his assassination, had a temple raised to him, in which Augustus consecrated to him among other pictures the lovely Venus Anadyomene of Apelles; a combination of circumstances sufficiently puzzling to modern ideas. The great picture of Alexander of Macedon leading the War-Genius bound, by the same noble master, who was venerated by the learned then as highly as now, having fallen into the hands of Claudius, he caused the face of Alexander to be erased and that of Augustus substituted. The best sculptures were used so completely as decorations, that sometimes a series of repetitions of the same figure were set up in gardens or elsewhere, as we use cast metal things or plaster vases.

Although pictures, as well as sculpture, bronzes, works in precious metals, even obelisks, sphinxes, and indeed every form of art, poured constantly into Rome, the greatest influx at any one time was caused by a real or pretended debt owing by the people of Sicily. On this occasion the whole of the productions of that ancient school and prosperous Greek city were carried away at once. But notwithstanding all this wealth of examples, and though patricians were occasionally painters (showing that the art was respected), still, in the first century of our era, we must consider painting as a mere upholstery art, except when applied to portraits. The art of sculpture still maintained its high excellence in various colonies, as well as in the central city; the Laocoön, the Antinoüs,\* the (Bel-

\* The original himself, the celebrated male beauty, Antinoüs, died A.D. 132, or about that time.

vedere) Apollo, and many others now held in highest esteem, being probably of this date or a very little later : painting never rose to a great height in ancient Italy. Sculpture, painted sculpture, was the form of art with which the pantheism, the materialism of the ancient world, most sympathised. Every one, I am told, is struck by the great disparity between the plastic and the painted works rescued from Pompeii. Some of the bronzes and most of the bronze furnitures are excellent in design and execution, many of the marbles being scarcely behind them. But the paintings are of a very inferior quality, generally speaking. Single figures there are of great beauty, and some grotesques elegantly designed ; but the composed pictures are meagre and flat, and the few landscapes as bad as Chinese.

While the now homeless nation of Jews were beginning to be recognised as a separate community in all great towns, and in Rome itself were working in thousands as labourers on the erection of the Colosseum ; while the forums, baths, and triumphal arches, were rising as the blossoms of successful force and refined sensualism, the obscure and mysterious union of those who went by the name of Him who died upon the cross was undermining pagan society. And at the same time took place that accident which, as it were, embalmed the body of an antique city ; 'potted it for posterity,' as has been said. In the year A.D. 79, Pompeii and Herculaneum were destroyed, and remained buried, not by lava, but by cinders and ashes, for the space of 1676 years. When the excavations began, a century and a half ago, shops were again opened with the traders' names over the doors, the pavement worn by the chariot wheels, household utensils lying about, glasses, dishes, amulets, and personal ornaments ;



mosaics at the door with the word 'salve,' *welcome*, or 'cave canem,' *beware the dog*, round the figure of a ferocious mastiff; paintings in tempera of all descriptions, houses covered with pictures and ornaments, a few imported statues of great excellence, equestrian and others, and many bronzes, lesser marbles, terra cottas. If we consider that these were but small provincial towns, although fashionable watering-places for Rome, too small to be mentioned by historians, the luxury as well as the artistic taste, though of a semi-barbarous sort, as far as anything classic may be so called, must excite wonder and admiration. To the people of these towns the most important public place was the theatre. So important was it that in an appeal to the emperor, on a quarrel that had led to a battle between Pompeii and a rival town, when the decision went against the Pompeians, they were condemned to the dreadful punishment of a closed theatre for ten years.

The collections from this buried city are now formed into a large museum at Naples, where many of the works cannot bear public inspection, and much of what is thus hidden decency will not allow us to describe. But the licentiousness and the cruelty were misfortunes of the times, rather than their crime; *they* saw no evil in them. The words *virtue* and *vice* in the popular tongue bore quite different meanings from what they do with us. The old religion did not place any ideals of purity and goodness above the appetites of our nature, and now that religion was little more than amusement, all the gods of all the countries of the empire were welcome. In the home of a Roman there was a chamber where the household gods were kept, and any public gods he might prefer—the last emperor, it might be; and a little later, when it was ascertained that the new sect were not Atheists, as had been thought, because

they had no visible gods, but that they worshipped Christ, the emperor, Alexander Severus, added images of Abraham and Jesus Christ to his collection, placing them opposite Orpheus and Apollonius of Tyana, both regarded as miracle-workers. Thus the earliest portrait of Christ we hear of authentically was not in the hands of the faithful, but in the chapel or *lararium* of a pagan.

These few particulars may have conveyed some notions of the life amidst which those lived to whom Paul wrote his epistle. Beneath the foundations of all the palaces, under the Seven Hills, and stretching for miles under the Campagna, were, and still remain, vast galleries, hundreds of miles of labyrinths cut in the soft rocks, tufa and pozzolano (the first a soft stone which hardens on exposure to the air, the second little better than sand), over which Rome is built. These galleries were doubtless originally quarries. From them the stone for building and the sand for mortar were extracted, as our coal pits are worked, beginning at the earliest Etruscan period, of which we know so little. Many of them being disused they had become the haunts of rebels and brigands, and also famed, as Horace indicates, for sorceries and witchcraft. Here also were thrown in thousands, perhaps millions, the bodies of the slaves and the poor; burning being the mode of disposing of the heathen dead by all who could afford the expense of a pile with perfumes and the ceremony of a procession.

In these subterranean recesses Christianity sheltered itself for centuries, working out new chambers and more intricate labyrinths one below another, in the hot, dry darkness, singing its sacred songs and holding continual love-feasts, baptising converts daily; for here were springs, and basins still remain; while the mighty city above fulfilled its splendid but downward destiny. It is supposed



that many of the first Church, the proselytes being mostly poor, might be really workers in these sand-pits; and it is certain that the hope of a resurrection, and that at no distant day, made the Christians preserve rather than burn their dead. They took care of the lifeless bodies, and revered those of the martyrs, endangering themselves to carry off the remains, and even to suck up the blood with cloths to be buried with them or to be kept as remembrances. The ancients retained the dust of their relatives in their houses in beautiful marble urns, many of which, the most lovely things in the world, are to be seen in the British Museum and elsewhere, the carcases of the lower orders being allowed to putrefy in heaps in their vicinity, almost in their midst; as on the slopes of the Esquiline, whence Mæcenas, whose name has become proverbial for critical judgment and poetic taste, excluded the dead-carts at last, and laid out his garden. Where then could the Christians store up their dead? They could keep them with themselves, the dearly beloved, not dead but sleeping, as many inscriptions on the tiles and stones that close up their beds



Inscription from the Catacombs, showing the sacred Monogram and Emblems.  
(Agincourt.)

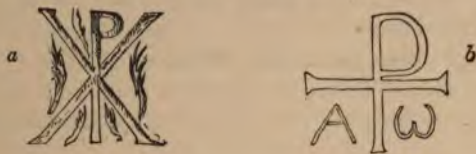
in the walls of these catacombs still express in various ways, 'In somnio pacis,' 'Dormit in Deo,' 'Dormit sed vivet;' Arethusa sleeps in God—sleeps but lives.

Thus the catacombs were gradually filled tier over tier ; and the first Christian art consists of the rough decorations on their graves, cut into the walls like shelves, and on the small chapels or oratories here and there hollowed out. The earliest of these are simple monograms or types ; but every one is important, not only as indicating the creed and ideas of the ages immediately following the apostles, the ages of Christian socialism—the socialism of love and a common hope—but also as showing us the foundations of middle-age art. Of all the multitudes of artists then living, it would appear as if not one had joined the holy society ; or, if any did so, they had not applied their art to the walls of the catacombs. What we find of the earlier centuries is of the rudest kind. Of the later periods there is much to be seen, even down to the tenth century, when occasional burials still took place. But the early graves are detected principally by the style of their embellishments and inscriptions, for the most part in miserable grammar and spelling.\* The exact date is only ascertained when the name of the contemporary consul is given. The earliest discovered belongs to our year 98, in the cemetery of St. Lucina, and the next is A.D. 102. Thousands of course *may* be as early as these ; indeed, while Peter and Paul were yet in the body these are supposed to commence.

First we have the monogram made by the first two Greek letters (equivalent to Ch and R) in the name of Christ, as in *a* ; then the shaft of the P is made into a cross by a different intersection, of the lines (*b*). Here the Alpha and

\* B is generally substituted for V, *bixit* for *vixit* ; Z is frequently placed for J, *Zesu* for *Jesu* ; occasionally K for C, *pake* for *pace*. Most likely all vulgarisms, but the last of these is a curious illustration of the hard pronunciation of the Latin C.

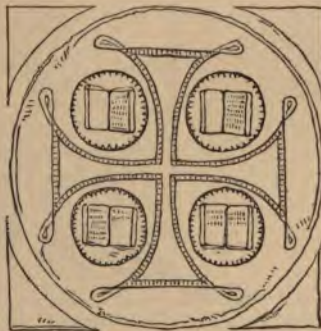
Omega also appear. A little later the regular Greek cross is seen: on one fresco in the catacombs it is quartered with four open books representing the evangelists. This cross was in



the middle ages developed into many varieties, typifying our Lord in the centre, and the evangelists, represented by their symbols, terminating the limbs of the cross.\* The pictorial acrostic of the fish appears very early, and also the figure



From an engraved Stone.  
(Vatican Museum, earliest epoch.)



Christ and the Four Evangelists.  
(From a Fresco in the Catacombs.)

of a ship, a symbol of the Church of which our Lord was pilot and the congregation passengers, from which idea originated the name of the area of a church or place of

\* See the Irish cross engraved in the Chapter on Celtic Art, p. 63.

worship, the *nave* (*navis*, a ship); we find also from the first a dove with an olive branch, a very archaic representation of Noah, a palm leaf expressive of martyrdom, an anchor for hope. There is also a strong tendency to interpret the Old Testament histories prophetically: rude diagrams of Daniel among the lions, instancing the protection of God; Jonah swallowed and disgorged, a figure of death and the resurrection. Other pictures of the earliest epoch exhibit a lamb



Divine Lamb, with a non-cruciform Nimbus, inscribed with Monogram.  
Earliest ages. From the Vatican. (Didron.)

or a cross standing on a mount, whence flow four streams; and often Christ as Orpheus, with a lyre in his hand, is seen surrounded by beasts and birds. But above all, the favourite subject is the Good Shepherd, young and beautiful, with a sheep on his shoulder, and a syrinx or Pan's-pipe in his hand. Then our Lord appears in His own person (perhaps at the middle of the second century), young, beardless, and beau-



tiful, as far as the artist could realise his own idea, sitting on a throne, or standing between Peter and Paul, or raising Lazarus, who appears standing in a niche at the head of a flight of steps swathed like a mummy.\*

Incidents in the life of Christ very soon begin to be depicted with individuality and portraiture. Here we already see the head of our Saviour as it has been reproduced and perpetuated down to the present, and not only His portraiture, but those of Peter and Paul also, the very



Good Shepherd. From the Catacomb of Sta. Priscilla.  
Second century. (Agin-court)

same 'heathen philosopher' type which lineally descended to Raphael's cartoons through Masaccio, Giotto, and their antecessors. Indeed the characteristics of dress and of head attributed to these and other apostles have continued unchanged from the second century. Only the beardless and

\* Are these intended for a representation of the historical fact of the raising of Lazarus, or is it simply the resurrection of the body by divine power? The figure touching the mummy with the wand is always juvenile.

beautiful head of our Lord, which was evidently not intended to be a portrait, alternates with a nobler but severer and older form with a short beard. No nimbus appears in the catacombs earlier than the end of the fourth century; down to which time, and long after it, the heads of Christ continue to appear young and beautiful, and with but little beard.

Nowhere in the catacombs do we find anything dreadful. There is no dwelling on the painful scene of the crucifixion, so often depicted with multiplied horrors from the tenth century downwards, encouraged by the monks and Jesuits; no pictures of martyrdoms, nor even lamentations. In the graves are found many little things, seemingly deposited as love-tokens, even dolls and marionettes in children's graves, while fixed in the mortar outside are small bottles or cups, thought to mark the graves of those who died by the sword.\* The number of terra cotta lamps that turn up is infinite; but there is another and more interesting object found in multitudes. This is a glass patera or deep plate of a very small size, beautifully embellished with pictures in gold. These are portraits; or a group composed of a male, female, and child, in Roman dress, presumably the holy family; or Peter and Paul; and the inscription is most frequently, *Pie Zese*, which has been translated, 'Drink and live.'†

\* These small bottles are in two or three instances marked with the letters Sang, or simply S, the contraction of Sanguis. It is very strange they should mark the bottles with what they contained. The dark brown deposit found in them, however, on being submitted to Liebig, was said by him to be perhaps the remains of human blood.

† 'On remarque assez souvent sur les verres les acclamations *PIE ZESES* pour *πῆ ζῆσαι*, *bois, je souhaite que tu vives!* ou, *PIE ZESIS*, pour *πῆ ζῆσαι*, *bois, tu vivras.*—Perret, Text, p. 105.

In pagan tombs are found small phials in great numbers, deposited by friends, and by a pious fiction supposed to be filled with their tears, and therefore called lacrymatories; but what are these in the Christian graves? They are small, hold very little liquid, and are certainly either sacramental, or festive, to be used at the Agapæ, or love-feasts, as if



a. Lacrymatory found in Pagan Tombs.  
b. Glass Vessel found in the Christian Graves.

every one present had provided his own chalice, and it had been buried with him as his most sacred possession. So great a step had been already taken in 'The Church,' prophetic of the many other steps when it had emerged into the light of day and the crosier had become a sword both spiritual and temporal.

## LECTURE II.

THE FOURTH CENTURY. — FORM OF CHURCHES. — PAINTING IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.—ALTAR-PIECES,—IVORY.

THE underground home of the early Church forms one of the most interesting monuments in the world, and has been illustrated by several important works, the last being that of M. Perret, published at the expense of the Government of France. But we are undoubtedly apt to form erroneous notions of the hardships there experienced. Even in the homes of the Roman patricians there were no bed-rooms with screened beds and dressing and washing appliances, and the houses of the lower orders must have been but dens or holes. Assembled in the catacombs, the followers of the new and better faith were mutually strengthened and assisted. Admitting that their persecutions were too real, and the sufferings on earth of the God they followed too sacred to be depicted and dwelt upon, still all that we do find recorded in types and figures is hopeful and joyful. There are several pictures and allusions to the Agapæ or love-feasts, which seem to have been frequent, and to have been scenes of much festivity.

But the contrast between the old and the new was then sufficiently striking. Above in the sunshine blazed the white marble and painted temples. The triumphant general, his



face painted with vermilion (minium), rode through the streets with his captives and legionaries; the theatres rang with shouts and groans; all the wealth and power of a city where dwelt a thousand princes showed themselves in many ways. Each successive century saw more public splendour and more incurable social and political disease, while the new community gained in numbers and importance, till not only the falling city, but the whole world, saw and acknowledged the faith, and the virtues that it inspired; and the sign of the cross, at first only secretly and enigmatically expressed on utensils and graves, appeared in gold and gems surmounting the sceptres and crowns of kings.

In the year 337, the year of the death of Constantine, quarrying for fresh building stone and marble had mostly ceased; the decaying masses of a more splendid era furnished materials enough. The Church was now dominant; and, although there had been a kind of revival of pagan zeal, the edicts against Olympus did not meet with much opposition. Nevertheless, in the minds of the most educated and refined of the unconverted there must have existed a frightful sadness. While barbarians were elected to the purple, and the empire was visibly breaking up, the new faith threatened to destroy the arts and annihilate poetry. Constantine was canonised by the eastern portion of Christendom, and at the same time placed among the gods by the Roman Senate. Some authorities in the Church thought all idols and temples should be destroyed; but fortunately this opinion was not universal. Sculpture and painting only suffered, architecture escaped; the temples for the most part remained standing, though stripped. After a time many were cleansed, 'their demons exorcised' by lustral water, and their outer shells fitted up for the purposes of the faith. Thus was saved the Pantheon

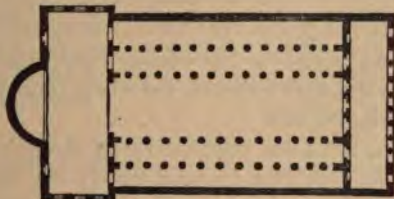
with its dome, which furnished so important an example for later architects.

In some places the zealots and brigands, an alliance too frequent in troubled times, assailed the desecrated buildings and their art; in others, the people, a majority of whom were averse to the new intolerance, defended the ancient shrines. The contest for the temple of Serapis at Alexandria affords an example. About sixty years after the death of Constantine, while the crowds, in spite of edicts, still thronged the gladiator shows, and witnessed with the old avidity the deaths of the annual thousands who continued still to be sacrificed in the month of December throughout the capital cities of the empire, this immense temple became the stage of battle between the old and the new. The 'faithful' carried the day, and after much bloodshed many of the finest works of the Greek masters were broken to pieces, and the Alexandrian library, the *new* library, towards which Mark Antony had presented Cleopatra with the entire collection of Pergamus, 200,000 volumes, was burned over the heaps of dead.

The species of buildings, however, first used as churches, and less objectionable to the converts, were the Basilicas, 'kingly homes,' as the word signifies, of which there were eighteen in Rome. These were mostly attached to the royal palaces, and, though properly courts of justice, had been more or less appropriated to the transaction of public business.

The little chapels in the catacombs are indeed the earliest apartments formally constructed for worship; but although they show already some features afterwards retained and further developed, the Basilica must be considered as the type of the Christian Church. In the catacombs the arcosoleum, or arched tomb in the wall, whose flat lid seems to have served as a table or altar, is at the eastern side of the often irregularly shapen crypt, and there appears to have

been a barrier in front, a rudimentary indication of a division between the chancel and nave. And these crypts are frequently in pairs; one being for the men, the other for the women. The space for the officiating priest, reader or cantor, was admirably provided by the circular apse or end of the Basilica, and the inferiority of women was long asserted by keeping them apart on the left side of the hall or body of the building. Sometimes indeed, even in the middle ages, they were not allowed to enter, as at Durham, where a separate church or Galilee was in a little time provided for them at the inferior (west) end; and afterwards, when they were allowed entrance to the cathedral, a cross line, the barrier of separation, was drawn across the pavement of the nave.



Plan of Basilica. (Agincourt.)

The Basilica was in shape a parallelogram, consisting of a central space with aisles at the sides. The row of columns which separated the aisles from the centre sometimes supported a gallery instead of ascending to the roof. The end of this parallelogram widened slightly, affording a hint of transepts, a peculiarity which was seized by the marvel-loving as an architectural prophecy of the form of the cross.

In the centre of the end wall was a circular recess of consi-

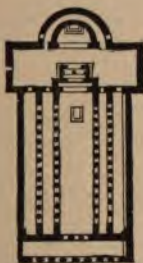


derable size and raised by a step or two ; affording the clergy their desired advantage ground, and a space for the communion table or altar. In the original uses of the building, the judges had sat here ; the officials of the court with the appellants occupied the space in front, the transept as we may call it ; the witnesses waited in the right and left aisles, and the public, such as were admitted, in the central space. Besides, in the front of the entire building, a court or pronaos existed, which became the place for penitents or catechumens, so numerous for a century or two, while as yet the majority had the most confused notions of their faith, when even the communicants often became inebriated with the sacramental cup, and the love-feasts converted the churches into a scene of debauchery ; all which is not surprising, when we consider the change from a select initiated few to a public comprehensive Church, when, besides curious Platonists and loquacious dialecticians of all heretical sorts, sincere converts and insincere, the whole community was invited within the pale.

This plan left little essential to be desired, and the churches that were built imitated closely the form of the Basilica. That raised by Constantine on the Ostian Way projected the transepts a little further out, confirming the cruciform plan, which has remained, with refinements and variations, throughout the fluctuations of architectural styles to the present day.

As we have seen the dead and the living associated in the catacombs, so we are prepared to find that the ground around the church was speedily enclosed as the cemetery ; and as baptism was the preliminary ceremony before the convert was allowed to join the throng within, baptisteries were erected close by ; circular buildings, splendid later examples of which exist in Florence and Pisa, in which all the

baptisms of these cities are still celebrated. By-and-by, however, when children only were presented for the ordinance, and the entire community was presumed to be Christian, the font was placed within the church at the entrance, or in the corner of the aisle. The bell-tower is another exceedingly important architectural addition. At first a separate building (as seen frequently in Italy, and as exhibited in the round towers of Ireland, some of which rise



St. John Lateran, Rome. Fourth Century.  
Built on Model of Basilica.



Cathedral of Pisa.  
Founded 1006.

to the height of 150 feet), it was afterwards included in the construction of the church, rising up at the entrance or at the intersection of the nave and transepts, adding much to the architectural whole.

The only variation from the cruciform plan of churches was the circular. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built by Constantine, was round, encircling, and as it were enshrining the sacred spot; and the circular church appears in this country in four examples, all commemorating that of the Holy Sepulchre, and built by the Knights Templars. The principal of these is the Temple Church in London, where


the circular building has had one in a pointed style added to it, and in which the service is now performed.

Whatever strictures may be passed on the Roman, as compared to the Greek architecture, it must always be borne in mind that its greatest, its leading distinction, was the introduction of the arch, the circular arch, from which sprang all others, and which made multiplicity of plan and endless development possible. This of itself makes Roman architecture infinitely important in history. But the Romans were much greater mechanics and engineers than the more artistic Hellenic people. When conquest extended, it was immediately marked by the construction of roads, as the first thing necessary towards the occupation of the country, otherwise inaccessible to the masses of brass-clad troops with their cattle and munitions of war. The great road to Britain was continuous, passing by Milan, Lyons, Rheims, Boulogne; then by Sandwich to London, and north-west by the track still traditionally known as Watling Street. This road, carried eastward again by Byzantium to Jerusalem, gave an unbroken (save by the sea) line of pavement, 3740 English miles in length, as calculated by Gibbon. This mighty thoroughfare, which was raised in the centre and paved with large but irregular blocks, was accurately divided by milestones, and went in a straight line cutting through mountains and bridging torrents. In North Britain at last there was an end of conquest; the Scottish mountains baffled valour, and the termination of empire was marked, by many successive generals, by attempts to fortify a line across the island to the exclusion of the Scotch.

The best of these attempts, which were of no great strength, and unworthy of the Romans, was that most probably completed by Hadrian, by far the greatest builder



among the emperors; and all along this line have been found innumerable altars and other monuments, all of a semi-barbaric rudeness. Here were cohorts of Germans, Syrians, Spaniards, and Moors; and one would say, from the number of sacrificial erections, they were the most pious people this part of the country has ever seen. There were votive dedications to Jupiter, Hercules, Apollo, Mercury, the Nymphs, the Genius Loci, to Fortune, to the 'three Divine Mothers,' to Mithras—showing the versatility of ancient piety; many of them having the inscriptions in Greek. None of these require much notice as works of art. But the Roman occupation, which continued down to A.D. 400, was necessarily distinguished by commerce, building, iron-working and other industries. The art of mosaic, then so highly prized, was much cultivated; mosaic pavements have been found in many localities; in the shires of Gloucester, Nottingham, Monmouth, Oxford, Dorset, Hants, Lincoln, Sussex, Wilts, and York. The best perhaps is that found at Woodchester in Gloucestershire,\* but another found at Horkstow in Lincolnshire is more interesting, as it contains a record of Christianity. In conjunction with the usual frets and ornaments, may be traced one of the monograms to be seen in the catacombs, and a repetition of the Ichthys or sacred fish. The workmanship is supposed to be older than the time of Constantine.

In Cornwall also are symptoms of our faith having been known in the island in these first centuries. On one standing-stone is the sacred monogram in the Greek form , the labarum, and there are many little chapels still

\* Some Gloucestershire pieces may be now seen in the British Museum, presented by H. C. Brooke, Esq.

existing there, belonging to the British times, with running water introduced at one corner, collected into a cistern large enough for the immersion of an infant. One of these, St. Peran-in-the-Sands, buried for a thousand years by drifted sand, was exhumed in a perfect state, except the roof, not many years ago. The form is a parallelogram, the floor being three steps lower than the external soil, and surrounded by a stone bench or seat attached to the wall. There was a symptom, even in this diminutive oratory, of demarcation of the east end from the rest, and the stone seat or bench was elevated and enlarged into a stone table or altar. The only decorations were at the arched doorway, which was surrounded by an enrichment resembling the cable-moulding doubled, with a human face sculptured above, and one on each side at the height of the spring of the arch.

In the northern part of the island, there was a church of white stone, a 'candida casa,' built at Whiter in Gallo-way, in 448. At this date, just half a century after the occupation by the Romans ceased, the knowledge left by them, and so permanently illustrated by the Wall of Hadrian, which terminated almost within view of Whiter, may have assisted the builders of that church : but, this traditionary knowledge dying out, 'sawn boards covered with rushes' came again to be considered a triumph of architecture sufficient to warrant record. Such were the first erections at Melrose, Lindisfarne, York, and other places, till Saxon bishops imported new skill and knowledge, and Wilfred built at Ripon and Hexham in 671-9, 'laying the foundations deep in the earth with great care, forming crypts and subterraneous oratories and winding passages.' The interior was divided into three distinct storeys, 'supported by smooth columns, some square, and others of various



shapes. The walls, and also the capitals of the columns by which they were supported, and the "arch of the sanctuary," were decorated with histories and images, and different figures carved out in the stone, and painted with colours displaying a pleasing variety and wonderful beauty. The body of the building was also surrounded on all sides by pentices and porticoes, which, with the most wonderful artifice, were divided above and below with walls and winding stairs. Within these passages and over them were galleries of stone, and various ways of ascending and descending, so ingeniously contrived that a vast multitude might be there and pass round the church without being visible from below.'

This account might very well describe the clerestory and triforium of a Norman cathedral, yet there is no doubt of its existence centuries before the invasion. 'Indeed,' says Eddi, the precentor, who wrote in the eighth century, 'there was no such edifice known on this side of the Alps.' It is now ascertained that the crypt under the present abbey-church of Hexham, certainly part of Wilfred's work, is built of Roman hewn stone. The 'great smooth foundation-stones mirifically wrought' are stones from the Wall and its stations, and the whole fabric may have been constructed of materials collected by the destruction of former works.

As to interior furnishing, there are few authorities to enable us to describe in detail. Bede's account of the twin monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth would prove them to have been supplied with various works of art from abroad; and his own compilations and earlier manuscripts there written and painted lead us to suppose many appliances and means were at command, such as we would not otherwise have believed possible. The illuminated books we

shall consider afterwards : but already was the bell heard clanging from belfry or round tower, and about the altar were no doubt silk embroideries, and jewellers' work, and folding-pictures of symbol-histories or portraits, for the delight of the faithful ; while in the south, through the agency of St. Austin, who came direct from Rome to convert the Saxon pagans of Kent, all the appliances of a mediæval ceremonial had already made their appearance.

Let us now turn to the art of painting in its connection with religion, and in its application to the altars and walls of churches. The Jews had no pictorial arts, were not indeed allowed by the law of Moses to make graven images and likenesses ; and this single circumstance may be considered fatal to the pretensions of tradition, which would carry the use of pictures up to the apostles themselves, and to St. Luke, who is reputed to have been a painter. But in the ages immediately following, when the converts were of all nations, ignorant of Judaism and even hated by the Jews, filled with the pantheistic love of the gods in visible shape, too illiterate to read, and utterly unable to become at once above the age and almost above humanity, every adjunct that art could supply was called for. As soon therefore as a place of worship existed, even in the catacombs, it was painted with symbols and histories ; and when the churches rose under Constantine, the arts were fully employed. Round the apse of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were twelve statues of the apostles. Immediately after this time, the question of employing statuary and pictures began to be raised ; some of the fathers protest, others approve. In A.D. 433, Sixtus, Bishop of Rome, had Santa Maria Maggiore covered with mosaic pictures, which he dedicated underneath 'to the people of God'—'Xistus episcopus plebi Dei.' Paulinus of Noli near Naples, about

the same time, after describing the pictures he had had executed to an extraordinary extent in the Basilica of St. Felix, at Fondi, says: 'If any should inquire why, contrary to common usage, I have made personal representations of holy persons in this sacred dwelling, I answer: Among the crowds attracted hither by the fame of St. Felix, there are peasants lately converted, who cannot read, and who have long been the slaves of profane usages, and obeyed their senses as gods. They arrive here from far and from all parts of the country. Glowing with faith, they despise the chilling frosts, they pass the entire night in joyous watchings, they drive away slumbers by gaiety, and darkness by torches. But they mingle festivities with their prayers, and after singing hymns to God, abandon themselves to good cheer; they joyously stain with odoriferous wine the tombs of the saints. They sing in the midst of their cups, and by their drunken lips the demon insults St. Felix. I have therefore thought it expedient to enliven with paintings the entire habitation of the Holy Spirit. Images thus traced and coloured will perhaps inspire those rude minds with astonishment. Inscriptions are placed above the pictures in order that the letters may explain what the hand has depicted. While showing them to each other and reading thus by turns those pictured objects, they do not think of eating until later than before; their eyes aid them to endure fasting. Painting beguiles their hunger and thirst; these sober gazers are intoxicated with excitement, though they have ceased to indulge in wine. A great part of the time being spent in looking at these pictures, they drink much less, for there remain only a few short minutes for their repast.' Such were the early congregations, and such the objects to be attained by employing the arts in their service.



In the arts of the Augustan times ivory was much prized for carvings, and note-books were much used composed of two tablets beautifully carved externally, hinged together so that they closed like our books, protecting the inner surfaces, which were slightly hollowed, and laid with wax. This waxed surface was that written upon by a sharp stylus, the other end of which was blunt for obliterating the writing at will. These tablets, called *pugillares* because they were so small they could be carried in the fist, or *diptycha*, double-leaves, were tied, sealed, and sent as offerings of friendship. Juvenal refers to them as conveying love-messages, and they were especially used by consuls on their attaining that dignity as presents to their friends, and also sent as their credentials or proofs that the enclosed writing or missive was authentic. Such letters so enclosed frequently had the portrait of the writer at the commencement.

Many of these ivories still exist, down to those of the last consuls, both of the East (A.D. 534) and West (541), long before which time they had appeared in churches as the forerunners of altar-pieces. When bishops became recognised by public authorities, consuls began to send them their diptychs as a mark of respect. These were gratefully placed on the altar, and their donors remembered in the prayers. Their use extended; St. Basil and St. Chrysostom direct in their liturgies that the deacons are to read from the diptychs on the altar the names of the living and the dead to be commemorated. The names and portraits of the great benefactors of the churches were thus held up to veneration, and their erasure from the diptychs was only effected by a solemn act, a form of excommunication or anathema. Hence the total degradation implied by such an act as that described by Anastasius in his life of Pope Agatho,

in which he says: 'They took away from the diptychs of the churches, from the paintings, and from their doors, wherever it could be done, the names and figures of these patriarchs, Cyrus, Sergius, Paul, Pyrrhus, and Peter, through whom error had been brought among the orthodox.'\*



Ancient Picture with folding Doors (triptych) hanging on a Wall.  
From a Painting found in Pompeii.

Thus the altar-piece, so important in the history of Italian and German painting that the art for centuries was employed on nothing else, appears at first as a book, and similar carved tablets were prepared as bindings for copies of the Gospels. During the reign of the Iconoclasts, the image-breakers, the Greek artists turned their attention to small exportable works of this description, and when the persecution ceased

\* It ought to be mentioned that no true diptychs whose inner surfaces have been pictures have been found: at least Mr. D. Wyatt and other writers have not particularised such existing. That the ancients actually closed in pictures in the shape of triptychs the above illustration shows.

their use was universal; and afterwards the crusader, the merchant, the poorest pilgrim, enclosed in them the holy pictures or small relics carried about as talismans, or used at prayer. The more important of these, having now two 'plaques' hinged as doors to a larger one, carved more elaborately within than without, the interior being a representation of the crucifixion or other important subject, give us the complete form of the altar-piece of the middle ages, which was of all kinds, carved, enamelled, painted, from the size of a few inches to many feet. Church pictures of value of later times, however large (as the Descent from the Cross by Rubens, for instance, in the cathedral of Antwerp), are frequently furnished with doors similar to those of the triptych.

Ivory continued in the early middle ages to be much in use. As it is still greatly prized in the East, especially in China, so it was in Europe till the improvement in metal-working superseded it at the hands of the silversmith. In the northern ballads we hear of 'reäl bone,' royal bone, as the material for the king's sceptre and the prince's chessmen, the tusk of the walrus being the substitute for that of the elephant, which of course was scarcely procurable in Scandinavia. A *find* of these chessmen in Lewis, one of the Hebrides, took place a few years ago, of great interest. There were many sets of them heaped together, as if the whole had been a merchant's venture; one set is now to be seen in the British Museum.

Drinking-horns were also made of this material, and decorated in the most sumptuous manner. That of Attila is said to be still in existence, and has been engraved. Such horns sometimes accompanied endowments or direct gifts of land, as proofs of the transfer. Of these several are well known: one may be seen in the possession of the Chapter of



York, the horn of Ulphus the Dane, a complete elephant's tusk of the largest size, about two feet and a half in length. The Pusey family have preserved a gift horn of this kind which has been repeatedly engraved.



1. Horn of Ulphus. York Minster. Length 2 ft. 6 in.  
2. Horn of Attila. 3. Pusey Horn.

To return to the church. Among the many applications of ivory may be mentioned the bishop's chair, the 'cathedra'; from which a bishop's church was called a Cathedral, and which was from the earliest times considered an object of singular importance. Examples still exist covered with plates of ivory very elaborately carved all over. Sometimes they were made of solid bone with carving of equal sumptuosity. Bishops also carried staves or crooks as the shepherds of the spiritual sheep, or, as some have conjectured, in imitation of the Roman augurs, who bore a long staff, or



lituus, with a curved termination. These exercised the ingenuity of the sculptor, and afford an interesting study to the artist from the care bestowed upon their execution and the variety of their design. These were not invariably of ivory or of any particular material, but are found of wood, as well as copper or other metal, enamelled, gilt, or plain.

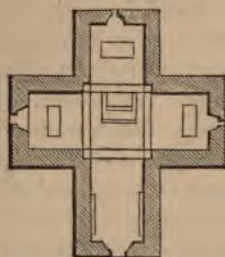
## LECTURE III.

## BYZANTINE ART.

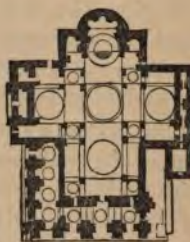
THE creation of a new capital of the world, Byzantium being changed into Constantinople, forms a great turning-point in the history of our art as well as of our religion. Before this is ancient history; after it begins the modern. Vast quantities of statuary and other works of art were removed thither as decorations; the new city was rich in classic remains perfectly preserved for many centuries, and affording pillage of this kind to the Venetians and others at a later time. By this means a school of art remained there after it had ceased in Italy. But it contained no pagan altars, Christian temples alone being raised, with relics to sanctify them, to the disgust of those who still sympathised with the learning of the past. And the majority of the buildings were forced up so hurriedly that they everywhere required to be repaired and supported, even in the next generation. The architecture which we found so much enriched in the days of Trajan and Hadrian had by this time expanded its constructive as well as decorative limits. The proportions of columns and other members were mostly retained, but the orders were less cared for, invention more at liberty; as shown in the palace of the lately deceased Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro, where openings with enriched mouldings,

huge consoles supporting columns, and other innovations appear, already indicating a changed state of manners and of arts, to be speedily spread over Europe as the Byzantine.

The form of the church in the West has been pointed out as originating in the parallelogram of the Basilica expanded into the cross, in its true, which has been called its Latin, form, in distinction from the Greek, which was constructed on the basis of a square, all the four limbs being equal. This square plan is that of the Byzantine church,



Church of St. Nazarus and St. Celsus,  
Ravenna. Fifth century.



St. Mark's, Venice.  
Tenth century.

surmounted by a cupola at the intersection of the limbs, with four smaller ones at the four extremities. The greatest existing example of this form in Europe is the church of St. Mark, Venice; but the most remarkable historically is the Mosque of St. Sophia, built by the wise Emperor Justinian, and dedicated for the second time by him in 548, afterwards converted to the uses of Mahometan worship, and still preserving its constructive features entire. At this date the pure Byzantine may be considered as having attained its greatest perfection, both in architecture and

in décoration, mosaic being the art invariably employed. Ravenna, the abode of the exarch or governor of Italy for the emperors, is now the only place in Europe where examples of this date may be seen with the decorations remaining; and the Church of San Vitale there is moreover interesting as having been the model for that at Aix-la-Chapelle, built by Charlemagne, about 800.

We have thus a connecting link with the Rhine, France, and Saxony, on the one hand, and through the Saracens in Sicily, where the adventurous Norman race established a conquest, on the other. From the Normans in the south it was carried home to Normandy and into England; and in all these migrations, beginning at Lombardy, the style was subject to further development. Charlemagne, the greatest figure in the early middle ages, with immense military and governing powers, making more conquests than Napoleon and marrying more wives than Henry VIII., is said to have wept on seeing the sails of the Norman pirates in the Mediterranean. The kingdom of the Lombards ceased under his sword, although he borrowed their architecture, and on many buildings on the Rhine the Lombard-Byzantine of his day is still exemplified.

The generic term Romanesque is now applied to all round-arched work from the time of Constantine to the appearance of the pointed style. In the Greek Byzantine there is great simplicity in the construction, and immense richness in the decoration, the glass mosaic with a gilt basis being liberally applied to the entire walls, the figures of prophets and apostles being represented on the golden ground. The sculpture on the capitals is for the most part foliage, of a debased acanthus kind.

In the Lombard variety the capitals are very diverse in form, and enriched with grotesque animals; the arcade



being more continuous as an external adornment; and the mosaic appears as geometrical borders round panels of coloured marbles.

With the Normans we are better acquainted in England. In these northern regions workers in mosaic were not to be found, so that the walls were never perhaps enriched to any extent, except by painting; but the carvers in stone endeavoured to supply the want, at least in doorways, by the repetitions of moulding now identified with the style, particularly the zigzag and nail-head.

From the age of Constantine, the vicissitudes of the more civilised portion of Europe increased. The distant governments were weak, the central heart having nearly ceased to beat; and Lombards, Franks, and Normans necessarily destroyed a great deal before they acquired the graces of culture. In all parts of the West, however little art had previously existed, a sensibility to its influence made pictures welcome as incentives to piety, painting being from the first the artistic exponent of Christianity, as sculpture had been that of paganism.

But in the East the employment of sculpture as well as flat representations, and the amount and kind of veneration paid to so-called miraculous pictures and statues, increased rapidly. Relics were often sufficient in Latin churches, a baser taste certainly; but the Greeks fell back on their art, and in two centuries from the founding of the new capital, every church or chapel in that part of the empire was filled with pictures of Jesus, of Mary, of Saints and Angels. Outside and within images met the eye, each with its circle of devotees, and constant miracles increased their importance and magnified their number.

Every city soon became possessed of a palladium in the

shape of a miraculous image (picture or sculpture) 'not made by the hand of man'—a phrase expressed by a single Greek word—whose presence in the camp or on the city wall was powerful to kindle the courage, revive the hope, or repress the fury, of the soldiers. The history of the most remarkable of these ascends to a very early time. They are still represented at Rome by the Veronica or 'true image,' a linen cloth said to have been piously used by a devout woman to wipe the sweat from the Sacred Face on the way to Calvary, and to have been found afterwards impressed by Christ with his own portrait at the moment of contact. These True Images existed at Jerusalem and elsewhere. But the most important miraculous picture was that of Edessa.

Abgarus, king of Edessa, says the curious and very early tradition as related by the last of the Greek fathers, St. John Damascenus, hearing the wonderful things related of our Lord, became influenced by Divine love, and sent ambassadors to the Son of God, inviting a visit from him, and offering him the strong city of Edessa as his protection; but should he refuse to accompany them they were charged to bring back his portrait. The artist however found he could not fix or even see the Divine Face, which shone with a splendour that baffled his powers. Jesus, to whom all things were possible, having compassion on artist and king, took a piece of linen, applied it to his face, and impressed the perfect image. 'This image,' says the saint, 'is in perfect preservation.' It had been preserved enclosed for the last 500 years in a niche in a wall, as the story went; and after its discovery it performed the important service of delivering the city from a siege on being exposed on the ramparts, and holy water sprinkled on its face. The cities

of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt were soon fortified with similar representations of the Saviour, his mother, and the saints, and each city presumed on their miraculous defence, against the spreading triumphs of the Arab fanatics now proselytising by the sword. But in the course of ten years all those cities fell with their pictures or statues into the hands of the Moslems, who were peremptorily and for ever interdicted by the Koran from the use of the fine arts pictorially. This interdict contributed to produce a new condition of decoration. In the rich and ancient city of Damascus they found a vast treasure of diapers which did not trench on the letter of the law, the arts of covering textile surfaces with splendid patterns, and also of sinking or engraving them in metal, having long existed in Damascus, as they continued indeed to much later times, whence the term *damask* still applied to such ornamentations. Here then was the starting-point for the style which the growing splendour of the Arabs required, and which in a short time, by the help of Byzantine skill, developed the Saracenic.

Edessa with its wonderful portrait, which had once protected the city, fell like the rest, and the Lord of Hosts seemed to have pronounced judgment against too great a dependence on the arts.\* Still the eloquence of the numerous communities of monks was exercised in defence

\* After 300 years of captivity, this palladium was yielded up for a ransom of 12,000 silver pieces, the redemption of 2000 captives, and a perpetual truce for the territory of Edessa. Gibbon, in a note in ch. xlix. quotes the criticisms of Pagi. 'The prudent Franciscan,' says he, 'refuses to determine whether the image of Edessa now reposes at Rome or Genoa; but its repose is inglorious, and this ancient object of worship is no longer famous or fashionable.'



of the images, although opposed by murmurs from the people, and scoffed at by the victorious unbelievers.

At this time Leo III. came to the throne of Constantinople. 'A peasant from the mountains of Isauria, a hater of images, depending more on arms, and ignorant of all the mystical theology of the day,' he issued an edict against them. A second edict followed; the statues were thrown down, and a smooth surface of whitewash cleansed the churches. Thus began, about 726, the greatest contest the world has ever seen on a question of art. The Iconoclasts, or destroyers of religious representations, on the one hand, and the orthodox, the superstitious, and the artistic, on the other, continued the contest, occasionally rising into sanguinary civil war, for 120 years.

Leo's next step was to secure the approval of the Church. The synod he called assumed the title of Seventh General Council, and under his authority, after a deliberation of six months, 338 bishops pronounced against all images carved or painted. Over the gate of the palace Chalke, there stood a great image of our Lord, in popular repute for miracles. This was the first to be assailed. The captain of the guard mounted the ladder with an axe and began the demolition, the crowd gathered, he was thrown down, and with his companions killed upon the pavement. The execution of the murderers only elevated them into martyrs.

The number of monks in the Islands of the Archipelago had given it the name of the Holy Sea; and the promontory of Mount Athos was called the Holy Mountain, then as now a vast warren of monasteries, and one of the most curious and interesting places in the world. These monks and islanders, casting off their allegiance to the emperor, sailed with a fleet of galleys to depose him, waving conse-

crated banners and armed with miracle-working pictures, confident till they came within the range of the Greek fire, which burned up and destroyed their defeated squadrons.

On the death of Leo, his son left the care of the capital to a kinsman, who immediately restored the worship of pictures, and was gladly hailed as Emperor both in Constantinople and in Rome. The artists, however, could hardly have had time to restore things to their former splendour, when his rightful master met the usurper in battle, and again the images fell. Then followed a crusade against the monks, and it is said, 'many lost their lives or limbs, their eyes or their beards,' and artists were even burned along with their works. A visitor-general was appointed, called the Dragon, the communities were dissolved, and the convents converted into magazines and barracks.

It must be confessed that the Church in both the East and West was in favour of visible objects of worship,\* but the Patriarch of Constantinople was under the hand of the emperor, while the Pope at a distance could assert himself more freely. He would not divest his churches of their charms, and no doubt found that the arts gave his missionaries and legates important advantages in the less cultivated parts of Europe. St. Austin, for example, advanced to his interview with the king of Kent, as Bede relates, singing a litany, with a silver cross and an image of our

\* I am told I ought to, or at least might, say veneration instead of worship: but a *miracle-working* picture is a super-natural object, it must be possessed of divine powers, and not only was, but ought to be, worshipped. It will be observed that Gregory II., as quoted p. 43, puts church images exactly on the same grounds as Pantheistic ones. In the same letter he also asserts the truth of the reputed history of the picture of Edessa.

Lord and Saviour painted on a board. Gregory II. expostulated, said he 'had tasted for ten years the annual comfort of the royal letters subscribed in purple ink,' but now that he was accused of idolatry, he must inform the emperor of the 'difference between the idols of antiquity, the representations of "demons," and the Christian images, the true icons of Christ, his mother, and his saints.' No result following such exhortations, the West threw off its allegiance, Lombardy was in arms, the tribute of Italy was withheld, and thus was brought about formally the dismemberment of the empire; and by-and-by Rome rose again from its depopulation and decay into a ghostly theological sovereignty strange to past history.

The final settlement of the question in the East, which was only arrived at after the zeal and despotism of six emperors had successively been opposed to that of the priests, was a compromise. Pictures were allowed, statues entirely prohibited. A complete and yet traditional system of art began which has continued without variation or addition to the present time, and only in small works do we still see the longing for the more sensuous and solid form of sculpture. Many little altar-pieces were lately brought into this country from the Crimea exhibiting as the ground a stamped gold plate, perforated or sunk in the places occupied by the heads or hands of the figures represented, which are smoothly painted as if seen below the drapery or nimbus. Thus the flatness of a picture is obviated, not by the unlawful elevation but by depression.

At the same time, Charlemagne took the question in hand, and the fate of art in Europe hung by a thread. However much the Italians were accustomed to art, the northern nations despised its use in religion, and after the Council of Nice had re-established its lawfulness, the great Franco-



German ruler, not yet emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, but all-powerful over the churches of Germany and France, convoked a council which was attended by 300 bishops at Frankfort, whereat Alcuin and other Englishmen assisted in a decision against pictures. This decree was confirmed by Louis the Pious so late as 825; nevertheless it gradually fell into forgetfulness, and the use or abuse of the arts was left to be decided by civilisation. At this distance of time perhaps it is possible to pass a judgment on this passage of history. The closing up of any of the avenues through which industry operates on matter, and by which ideal impressions reach the mind, must be wrong. How much darker would the dark ages have been without the arts in the service of religion! Nor is it at all clear that the prohibition would have elevated the worship of these times, or that a negative measure would have produced any other result than that of narrowing the refining influences of the day. The Greek Church was not spiritualised by sculpture being interdicted, nor would it have been so had painting been also prohibited. In the middle ages in Europe it was this kind of religion or none; although now I suppose there can be no harm in saying that winking and miracle-working pictures, relics, medals blessed or consecrated used as amulets, and all such materials, are only believed in by the interested and the grossly ignorant.

But had painting been proscribed in the East, little would have been lost. The Greek artists taught the Lombards to raise the massive arcaded fronts and piazzad streets. They initiated the Saracens into their lovely adaptation of ornament, and in the application of painting, mosaic, glazing, and stucco work. They were indeed the preceptors of the middle ages in letters and in the useful as well as fine arts. The mosque of Touloun at Cairo, built in 876, and

showing a transitional condition of ornament, was the work of Byzantines, as were others in Sicily, and elsewhere. It was so also in Italy: St. Mark's is on the true Greek model, with its mosaics, its vestibule, its cupolas; and it is possible that the erection of the Romanesque churches on the Rhine, and the Norman in France and England, may have been assisted by Greeks. In the art of illumination we shall find equally the Eastern tuition, and the school of enamelling at Limoges was Byzantine in spirit as well as style.

But after the struggle we have related, their pictorial art fell under a prescribed form which pressed them into Egyptian rigidity, and fixed them there for ever. It was the emancipation from this that so moved the Florentines, when Cimabue's Madonna was carried through the streets to the church of Sta. Maria Novella, rather than any completeness in the picture itself. The day was a festival, and the quarter through which it passed was called *l'Allegro*, the joyful.\*

The promontory of Mount Athos has been already mentioned. In this sacred region lived none but monks, and their endless monasteries are covered with pictures. Here Mr. Curzon penetrated in his hunt for MSS. and found in closets and oil vaults of these old-world communities, in some of which the habit of reading had fallen into disuse, stores of rich and rare manuscripts of the early ages written in uncial characters, authoritative copies of the Scriptures, and other inestimable treasures.

But the visit of MM. Didron and Durand disclosed things even more interesting to the artist. They travelled from

\* Mr. R. N. Wornum informs the author that he finds good reason to question this often repeated story, at least in relation to Cimabue and the picture of the Madonna.



Cimabue's Madonna. Church of Sta. Maria Novella, Florence.

cloister to cloister, and from church to church, and found them all illuminated with the tall rigid figures draped in the symbolic colours, the folds falling in the same stiff series of lines, and the same inscriptions written on the gilded or blue grounds which these learned archæologists recognised as the



infancy of modern art, yet many of these paintings were but lately done. At last they came upon a reverend artist with assistants at work on the wall of a chancel, and beheld the early ages revived before their eyes. It was evident invention was looked upon as impiety or nonsense, and nature as the region of sin, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. But let us take the story from M. Didron himself.

While travelling in Greece and other Eastern countries, he had become more and more puzzled by the fixed character of the types, as well as by the identity of the treatment, in all the paintings he studied. 'With us,' he says, 'a scene from the Old or New Testament in a building of the 12th century differs notably from the same scene figured in one of the 13th, 14th, or 15th, and still more from one of the 16th style of art, when the great masters everywhere exerted so great an influence. But in the church of St. Luke the Baptism of Christ, the Pentecost, Moses, and David, are in mosaic exactly as they are in fresco at Cæsariani, although St. Luke's is of the 10th century, and Cæsariani of the 17th. With us monuments of the same epoch even present curious varieties in different countries or provinces. For instance in the Fall, the fruit that seduces Eve is often a bunch of grapes in Burgundy or Champagne, an orange in Provence, and an apple in Normandy. But in Greece the imagery is all identical, like impressions from the same engraving. The Maréote painter of the 18th century continued to do as the Venetian of the 10th, or the Athonite of the 5th or 6th. Even particular folds, as those which attempt to express the knee through the dress, were exactly continued, and in distributing the pictures in the church, the places where every subject and every character should come in the general arrangement are still the same. Here then we see the

artist the slave of the theologian ; he serves tradition as an animal serves his instinct.' As it was in Egypt and perhaps in Assyria, it has been under Byzantine rule, only starting from a higher point of development.

The number too of the pictures and of the individual figures in them struck him and his companion, Durand, with amazement. In the great church of the monastery of Salamine, M. Poqueville had stated the number of figures painted in the interior at 150,000, and M. Didron was so struck by the multitudinous fulness of the walls, that he inclined to believe the statement, till he actually counted them, and found they were 3780, a great reduction, but still an astounding number. If in our day in France, he says, one of our greatest artists were commissioned to execute such a work, say in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, he would have long to study, and would die before it was accomplished. He inquired the name of the artist, and was directed to an inscription carried by one of the figures to this effect: '1735: this venerable and holy church has been painted by the hand of Georgios Marcos, of the town of Argos, with the aid of his pupils Nicolaos Benigelos, Georgakis, and Antonis.' Who then was George Mark? A great and notable artist surely, but, although he had lived there only a century ago, M. Didron could find no memory of him or even of his pupils.

Didron passed on to Mount Athos, the academy, as he says, where Byzantine art was formed, the Italy of the East. The Holy Mountain contains twenty great monasteries like small towns, ten villages of monks, 250 cells, and 150 hermitages. The smallest of these monasteries have six chapels, the largest thirty-three, the total number being 288. The villages possess 235, and all the cells have chapels; thus there are on the territory 935 churches, chapels, and oratories,

and all are covered with fresco, and filled with paintings on wood.

‘The first convent we approached had had a large church newly built. We entered, and were transported to find a painter busy on the porch with two apprentices and two pupils, the older being a deacon. Here then was a chance to learn something of the secrets of the school. I mounted the scaffold and addressed the master. A young monk applied the lime to the wall, the master made the sketch upon it, the elder pupil filled colours into the contours so marked out, while the younger made the ornaments upon them, and lettered the inscriptions.

‘The master sketched from memory or by inspiration. In an hour under my eye he had drawn on the wall a picture representing Christ giving his apostles the mission to evangelise the world. Christ and the other (eleven) figures were the size of life; he worked without paper, preliminary studies, or model. I asked him if he had done those that were finished, and learned he had. We were astonished: these pictures were incontestably better than those of our second-rate artists, and might be thought above our best in religious feeling.

‘This rapid artist astonished us still more by his prodigious memory. When he had traced his figures, I heard him dictate the inscriptions and sentences to accompany them. These were from the Bible, from the Greek fathers, from the writings indeed of the characters represented, whoever they might be, and this he did without notes or book. I expressed my delight and amazement, at which he in his turn seemed surprised, said it was not so great a thing to do surely! and went on quietly with his work.

‘We proceeded on our journey, having our credentials to show at Kares the capital. A month was employed in



visiting the mountain. Frescoes were everywhere, mosaics rare. After this study we returned to our starting-point, rich in notes and dates, and the names of artists traced by the brush on their own works, but still embarrassed with the difficulty relative to the unity and celerity of production. Our painter had advanced a great way. I spoke about the men whose names I had collected; he knew nothing of them, nor cared much: even those of last century he remembered but vaguely, and without casting his eye on my notes, went on with his work. "But," said he at last, "look into that book; it is by the painter Paucelinus, who lived in the eleventh century; there you will see all we do, how we prepare the colours, how we compose and place our subjects, and what inscriptions are to go to the figures."

'I seized with avidity the book he gave me, and soon saw that it was the bible of his art, containing the laws and fixing the character of all that I had seen. The treatise was called the "Painter's Guide." It is divided into four parts. The first technical, describing how the walls or panels are to be prepared, and so forth. The second points out how the histories are to be represented, and how all the patriarchs, prophets, sibyls, apostles, and saints are to be characterised; what colour the dress of each is to be, what expression and shape belong to the nose, mouth, and eyes, the length and colour of the beard, and so on. Also how the labels are to be introduced, with their inscriptions. The third part points out the locality in the church which the subjects belong to, whether porch, fountain, nave, choir, or sanctum; and the fourth or appendix treats of the faces and appearances of Christ and the Virgin; the whole ending with an anathema against those who say that such representations are unlawful.'

The next difficulty of the savant was to get possession of the book, which was no easy matter. He went from one

artist-monk to another, finding that the very aged, who might be expected to need it no more, looked upon it as a legacy to their successors. At last in the studio of Father Macarios, where he found a pupil in the middle of the floor reading in a high voice from the very treatise, while the others diligently listened, he made an arrangement to have a transcript sent after him to Europe, and it is now translated by M. Durand and published.

This 'Painter's Guide' begins with a salutation in the Lord, and a dedication to the Virgin. Then the aspirant is cautioned to weigh himself, and before an image (painting) of 'Mary the Conductor,' to pray in a high voice to Our Lord: 'Thou who hast deigned to draw the sacred lineaments of thine own visage, and to impress them on the veil which cured the disease of King Abgarus; Thou who didst illuminate the Evangelist Luke that he might represent the beauty of thy most pure mother;' and so on, asking help to do worthily what he takes in hand. It was thus Fra Angelico began the day, often affected to tears by the subjects he had to contemplate, and rarely altering what he had done, as, he said, God had willed he should so do it. A frame of mind scarcely possible except in the closed sphere of Mount Athos or a Dominican convent of the fifteenth century; but doubtless these anecdotes contain in them a lesson of infinite importance: if we do not daily attempt to elevate ourselves to our work, to be, as well as to do, our best, we had better not touch any noble work or sacred theme whatever.

This book of about 500 pages ends with these words of the transcriber:—

After having finished, I have said, Glory to the Lord,  
And I have said again, Glory to Thee, my God,  
And a third time, Glory to God in all the universe.



Such is the impressive termination of labour by the single-minded Greek; and such is the state of the Byzantine school ruling over Eastern Christendom and the Russian empire, and as it has continued for a thousand years. It has no regard for secular life, no care for the better expressions consequent on continued study of nature; it repudiates altogether a clearer understanding of the subjects it treats. Such, it is to be feared, will be the history of every science, art, or people, controlled by a priesthood, and used as an appliance, or considered simply in relation to religion.

## LECTURE IV.

## CELTIC ART.

## ILLUMINATED BOOKS, ENAMELS, ETC.

It is so seldom we find a new root, so to speak, in any of the arts, that any truly original form becomes exceedingly interesting and important. The Greek and the Etruscan are the same in principle, the Roman proceeds from them, the Byzantine and its Norman expression from the Roman, and the Saracenic also in obedience to new conditions; Gothic architecture in some of its features doubtless has the same genealogy. But at the period when Franks and Germans were as yet untouched by Byzantine refinements, and the name of Roman had become even a term of contempt in the mouth of a Lombard, we find new forms of decoration, if not new arts, springing up among the Celts of the British Islands and Scandinavia.

The first efforts of all nations have a certain uniform character. The Fret, that border enrichment formed on the basis of the square, is nearly as common on Chinese patterns as on Greek architecture; it appears in Hindoo and in Mexican works. In the carving of paddles and war clubs of the South Seas we find the elaborate figuring, the minutely covered surface, and even identically some of the patterns, on the Celtic productions. The Celtic art remaining to our day is of three kinds. Illuminations on books,

Irish or Anglo-Hibernian, having the head school in Ireland: Sculpture on standing stones, of Norwegian and Danish origin, Runic inscriptions being continually found on these ornaments, whether in Scotland, the Isle of Man, or other localities: and Enamel, France being probably the earliest seat of the art. An extremely rich and elaborate grotesque is the most attractive feature of the style, showing the same spirit that in an after age expanded itself in the multiplicity of parts and endless variety of the fully developed Gothic, when the Northern nations applied themselves to architecture.

Books were of course introduced to the North of Europe by Christianity. The formation of libraries, the collecting of manuscripts in large quantities, was not uncommon among Roman patricians. Marcus Varro called forth the praises of Cicero for having had painted in his books the portraits of more than 700 celebrated persons. These portraits were miniatures, heading the works of the authors, or perhaps histories of the persons thus commemorated in portraiture. Seneca speaks of books ornamented with figures; but the earliest extant pieces of caligraphy so enriched are not older than the fourth and fifth centuries, being a Terence and a Virgil in the Vatican library.

These libraries were composed of books in two forms: the volumen or scroll, a succession of pages on a long panoramic sheet of papyrus unwound by one hand and wound up again by the other as the reader proceeded; and the codex liber, or series of pages bound together at the back, and tied round by a cord. The volume was kept in a case, and the vellum books on shelves, some of the literary men of that day having them in quantities approaching to the number of printed works now accumulated by private individuals.

But whatever the most adorned of these may have been, they can scarcely have approached the illuminated splendour of the MSS. of the early and middle ages, which are now among the most valuable and interesting records of art. The respect claimed by the Bible and books of devotion, exceeding that accorded to poetry and history, made book illumination an act of piety, and in the work of Irish or Scottish monks we find the earliest examples of the independent and surprising scheme of art proceeding from the aborigines of the north-west of Europe.

Perhaps the complete ornamentation of MSS. by borders, and whole pages of illumination, may be properly considered a Western art. When the battle against religious pictures raged, we learn that quantities of books of the library founded by Constantine were burned because of their paintings; but these may be considered simply portraits prefixed; indeed only such paintings, they only being capable of a superstitious use, would be obnoxious to the iconoclasts. And, although all the illuminations of the early middle ages executed in Europe, except the early Irish, are expressly Byzantine in spirit, yet they were produced in the West, France and the Rhine towns being the countries most fruitful in their production.

Nearly contemporary with the production of the Virgil of the Vatican we find a curious illustration of the zeal already excited in Ireland for the production of books. About 563, St. Columb or Columbkille, afterwards missionary to Scotland, finding a part of the Holy Scriptures in a book belonging to Finnian of Moville, set about secretly to transcribe it, remaining in the church privily after service, and so being shut in all night. This went on both night and day; till, when nearly finished, the original book was demanded by Finnian, who thereby discovered how St.



Columb had been employed abusing his hospitality, and stealing (as he considered it) the treasures of his learning. He therefore demanded the copy as well as the original; and King Diermit, to whom the dispute was referred, gave the decision against Columb in words which became proverbial: 'To every cow belongs its calf; so likewise to every book its copy.'

From this early day for many centuries the production of illuminated works was an honour to Ireland; her missionaries carried such works out with them—St. Columb into Scotland, and Aidan into Northumberland; many were conveyed to France, and are yet preserved; St. Columbanus, about 610, to Switzerland, where a fine specimen is yet to be seen in the library of the former monastery established by St. Gall, one of his assistants. The number still extant in this country and abroad certainly shows a greater activity and a greater perfection in the art than any other country exhibited at the same period.

The colours mostly used in the interlaced bands that constitute so large a part of the scheme of Hibernian decoration are white, yellow, or red, on a black ground; but the variety of pigments is very considerable, and their brightness remains perfect to the present day. I am not aware that any instance of mixing the colours so as to produce hues is observable; whatever colour appears is evidently, I think, transferred through the hands of the illuminator in its pure and simple state. Interlaced animals afford the artist his most characteristic material, and also the field for his richest colour. These are principally dogs and birds of the heron kind, their limbs, necks, and tails being elongated and woven into a mesh of tracery. In no example of pure Irish illumination do we find foliage. Wherever foliage appears the Byzantine influence is manifest; a debased acanthus



being at this time, or rather a century or two later, when the earliest remaining European examples were painted, the almost exclusive material of Byzantine ornament.

The most elaborately finished of these native productions are the Book of Kells and the Durham Gospels, both monuments of historical as well as artistic interest. The first of these is now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and is said to be 'a magnificent work, both for grandeur, intricacy of design, and perfection of execution.' The other, the Durham Book, is in the British Museum.

Eadfrid was made bishop of Lindisfarne in 698, and he it was, and his assistants, who worked out the splendid pages of this copy of the Gospels. His successor, Ethelwold, caused it to be bound and adorned with golden clasps and gems by 'Bilfrith the Anchorite,' who, says Simeon of Durham, was *aurificii arte præcipuus*. Thus completed, it was one of the glories of the place, and was carried away along with the bones of St. Cuthbert as the most precious treasure from the incursions of the Danes. During its perambulation in these troubled times it was the subject of a miracle; having been washed overboard and lost in the sea, a revelation was vouchsafed by Cuthbert to one of the brethren in a vision of the night, that it would be found on a certain part of the coast. Unhappily there are no marks of sea-water either inside or out; but indeed this may be a part of the miracle, as Fuseli said of the smallness of the boat in Raphael's Miraculous Draught of Fishes.

At all events the book is safe, and shows us what could be done by native artists, just twenty-five years after Benedict Biscop raised the monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth, and brought glass windows and pictures to adorn them from abroad. Some of its pages are almost entirely covered by the mesh of elaborate and charmingly coloured grotesques

one of which lately employed an artist for months working daily at his task of copying. And all of them are equally finished; the patient hand of Eadfrid has hurried or slighted nothing, elaborating his inventions with the steady particularity that belongs ordinarily to merely mechanical labour.



Anglo-Hibernian.  
(From a Letter in the Lindisfarne Gospels, British Museum.)

The 'Runic knot,' which forms so important a part of these decorations, is found abundantly on the stone sculpture, and continued to the last century in use among the Scottish Highlanders in embellishing dirk handles and other things. Similar interwoven animals are still to be seen covering the lintels and imposts of the wooden porches of Norwegian churches. Such is the persistence in imitation, and so seldom do we find invention supplanting established forms. In the hands of the illuminators, however, it soon disappears, being superseded in the later Saxon times by the foliated style of ornament.

The incursions of Danes and other sea-faring adventurers from the North, ending in their incorporation with the natives in some parts of Scotland, have, it is supposed, left us the monuments next to be noticed; vertical stones or crosses covered with carving in low relief. It is strange, however, that in the south of England the much more complete subjugation of the country should not have afforded similar proofs of Danish art, while in Ireland, which remained comparatively free of the invaders, some of the finest and most elaborate carved crosses are to be found. In Scotland they exist in large numbers, the work published by the Spalding Club showing remains of 150 of these funereal or religious trophies, while in the Isle of Man they are nearly equally numerous. Those in the latter place are claimed by Worsaae as Norwegian, and attributed to the period of Northern rule, the beginning of the eleventh century.

The general form of these standing stones being that of a cross limits their antiquity to Christian times. Tradition assigns to some a commemorative origin where battles or other important events befell; but we know that the Irish missionaries, when time and means permitted, erected crosses where they had been successful in Christianising the natives. This is particularly mentioned of Kentigern, one of whose crosses is curiously enough said to have been made of sand. That they were the production of mixed pagans and converts is evident from the existence, along with the interlaced animals and woven bands nearly equalling in complexity those of the illuminator, of certain mysterious figures analogous to no Christian symbol. These are found on one-half the whole number of Scottish monuments, and, although as yet undeciphered, they bear a strong evidence of meaning, and seem to belong to the rites of paganism.





Mystical Figures. From Monuments in Aberdeenshire. (Sculptured Stones of Scotland. Spalding Club.)

The origin of interlacing, as a *motif* in ornament, has found an intelligent inquirer in Mr. French of Bolton. 'Interlacing,' he says, 'is found in an infinite variety of devices in the earliest sculpture, whether of stone or metal, and in the oldest illuminations of Britain and Ireland. It retained its peculiar character throughout the Roman occupation, slightly modified by, and often mixed with, classical ornaments. These, however, disappeared in a great measure during the Saxon period, while the interlacing continued; a circumstance that induces the belief that it was equally familiar to the Saxon invaders and British aborigines. We find it in the enamelling of metals, and afterwards in the Norman arcades, especially those on the early fonts, and it continued long to influence the artist even in

the reticulated quarries for windows and in diaperings for walls. How then did this ornamental interlacing originate?'

It is a generally recognised fact that ornaments on first coming into use represent something they had supplanted. Mr. French applied this observation to the subject of interlacing. The ox skulls, rams' heads, wreaths of flowers, sculptured on ancient temples and altars, stood in place of the actual things hung up as trophies in a ruder age. So fond are we of preserving a familiar form that we make the improved article look as like the old one as may be. Thus on the body of a railway carriage we paint the bends and use the colours of the stage coach, making it represent three coaches joined together. Now the earliest art, and the one most independent of tools, is basket-making, and the earliest authentic records of Britain refer to its inhabitants as expert basket-makers. Their houses were made of willows and reeds; doors made of wattles may yet be seen in the Highlands; 'their fences and fortifications were living trees with interwisted branches; their boats were baskets covered with skins; their domestic furniture, defensive armour, even the images employed in their religion, were of wicker-work; and, although we have no positive proof that such was the case, it is probable the chariots so formidable to the Romans were similarly constructed.'

The monastic historians continue to represent wicker-work as a principal architectural material. The so-famous monastery of Iona, founded by Columba in 563, was so built; as it is recorded that he 'sent forth his monks to gather twigs to build their hospice.' Glastonbury was, according to William of Malmesbury, 'a mean structure of wattle-work.'

A manufacture which was probably progressing for centuries before the Roman occupation must have acquired a



large amount of refinement as the result of so much practice. We have, indeed, direct evidence that the Romans greatly admired the ornamented baskets of the British, which were exported in large quantities and became fashionable appendages among the luxurious furniture of the imperial city. Juvenal mentions them about A.D. 120, and Martial also. It is not improbable that these baskets were enriched with colour and even gilding.

When the Briton had thus made his first step in domestic civilisation, he would still be subjected to great inconvenience from the absence of any suitable vessel to convey or store away a supply of water. To invent a water-vessel would be a necessity. From the earliest period accustomed to line the wicker-work walls of his hut with clay to exclude the cold, he would naturally line the basket also with the same tenacious material; which, partially hardened by baking, would give him a water-vessel. Now all the urns found in British graves are marked by zig-zag lines quite analogous to the impression of wicker-work.

And the crosses set up by missionaries: if they dwelt in wicker-work huts, was it likely they could erect sculptured stone monuments? Might they not also be wicker-work? and those of stone, cut in the later time of iron tools, preserved the venerated appearance of the older crosses by this interlaced ornamentation. In effect, Mr. French has found one record of a cross of woven twigs in the church on the island in Lough Dearg, the scene of St. Patrick's purgatory.

This theory of the origin of this style of ornamental design is ingenious and interesting. If it be the correct one, it carries this species of ornament to a period long prior to the production of the Book of Kells and the Durham Gospels, and long before any geometrical ideas could



Sculptured Cross, Kirkcubbin, Ireland.

be entertained. The illuminators must have derived from the same source, or at second hand must have imitated from the carvers.

The third form in which we find any expression of native art in the infancy of the middle ages is enamel.

Enamels are substances of a vitreous nature, variously coloured by metallic oxides. They are either transparent or opaque. Opacity is obtained by adding to the vitreous mass a certain quantity of oxide of tin. The first mention of applying and fusing colours to metal is by Philostratus, a Greek, who established himself in Rome at the wish of Julia, wife of Septimius Severus, in the early part of the third century. In his 'Treatise on Images' he has these words: 'It is said that the barbarians living near the ocean

pour colours upon heated brass, so that they adhere, become like stone, and preserve the design represented.' The earliest pieces of enamel-work preserved are French, of the Gallo-Roman period, and it is considered established that the art had no existence in Greece or Rome in the third century, while it was practised in the imperial cities of Gaul and in Britain. A bronze shield of late British workmanship, with red enamel in the ornaments, found in the Thames at Battersea, and other late British bronzes partially enamelled, may be seen in the British Museum. The art, however, made no progress in the West, while it was introduced into Constantinople, much employed and variously used there. M. De Laborde and M. Labarte have described the practice of the art as divided into three distinct methods.

1st. Cloisonné or walled; in which the colours are separated from each other, and the outline of the design expressed by narrow bands or fillets of metal placed upon the solid foundation.

2nd. Champlevé or hollowed; spaces to receive the colours being scooped out of the solid metal, a portion of the surface being left as a demarcation between, and to express the forms.

3rd. Painting, either with transparent colour on chiselling in relief, or on a plate of metal with vitrifiable colours; in which last case the metal merely answers to the canvas or panel of the oil painter.

The first of these three methods was either invented or adopted by the Greeks, and all the extant specimens are said to have some features of Byzantine work. I say adopted or invented, because, although enamel was new to the Romans when seen in the productions of the barbarians of the West, it was not new to the world. The same inventions spring up in an indigenous manner in different

regions, the requirements being the same. Thus indelible colours for dyeing woven fabrics, and colours applied by heat, were sought for and found in various quarters of the world. Beating gold and applying it to surfaces, cutting dies and stamping with them, which is indeed printing, were independently originated in diverse countries and periods.

Enamels of the earliest ages, having been so generally applied to gold, have become very rare. The most notable pieces of the Greek method are the crown of Charlemagne and his sword, still preserved in the imperial treasury in Vienna, and still part of the state adornments of the emperor. The shrine of the Magi at Cologne, in which the skulls of the so-called Three Kings are shown, is a much more sumptuous example, though of a later time.

But there have been found in England several interesting specimens, though small, of a date between those of the two just-mentioned Franco-Byzantine examples. The



Ring of Ethelwulf, father of King Alfred.

earliest of these is the ring of King Alfred's father Ethelwulf, done in the true Western manner of hallowed-out enamel, and presenting no Byzantine ornament, while the



'Runic knot' and grotesques appear upon it. Another ring, also identified by being inscribed with the name of the owner, Alstan, Bishop of Sherborne in 867, has been lately recovered, and also other examples of very early though less certain date. But more interesting than these is one found at Athelney in Somerset, the very place where King Alfred hid himself in his adversity when hard pressed by the Danes. It is an article in gold whose purpose has not been determined, bearing round the edge 'Alfred caused me to be made,' and ornamented by a figure holding in each hand something resembling a large flower. It is walled or filigree work, and has consequently been considered a specimen of those foreign artists this great king brought into England. The colours, however, are the same, blue and green, as on the ring of Ethelwulf, with a third, a degraded red. It is clear that neither the ring of his father, who died while Alfred was still young, nor that of the contemporary bishop, could have been done by the artists in question: they therefore give us pretty certain proof that this difficult jeweller's art was practised by natives of this island, or of countries in nearest relation with it, although Labarte deems them insufficient evidence. Most probably it had continued in use from the British times when the ruder bronzes now in the British Museum were made.

Whether this be so or not, at that very time enamelling became fashionable at Constantinople, and was coming into use in Italy, along with the glass mosaic so characteristic of the Romanesque. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries many works appeared of the richest barbaric beauty, and the hollowed-out process prevailed over the walled or filigree. The shrine of the Magi at Cologne, which was made at the close of the twelfth century, is wrought in both processes; but in that of Charlemagne, presented to Aix-

la-Chapelle in 1250, the hollowed style only is used. We now find the enamels of Limoges beginning to be mentioned, enamels which afterwards made so great a figure, and which are now so much prized.

The French town of Limoges, in the province of Upper Vienne, was a Roman colony, and from that early time remained a centre of civilisation and commerce, rising in importance in the palmy period of mediæval art, the fourteenth century, by several manufactures, especially that of enamel; and there is little doubt that nearly all the enamels on copper now extant proceeded from Limoges. Artistically speaking, these cannot be expected to show any other than Byzantine forms and conventions, no school of painting having as yet sprung up in Europe, and the difficulty of the process making enamel more a craft handed down from father to son than a fine art proceeding from talent or genius. The sculptor of the early middle ages was never so deeply enslaved by Greek authority as the painter, and the architect very soon emancipated himself, pointing to heaven his pinnacles and spires trembling with the lovely tracery derived from the study of nature. Besides, Limoges was brought into closer connection with Greek authority by the settlement there of a Venetian colony in the eleventh century, making it an emporium for the produce and barter of the Levant.

It will be perceived we have already left Celtic art far behind in point of time. Let us follow out the subject of Enamel into the *renaissance*, when vitrifiable colours were applied to earthenware as well as metal; shortly after which time it gradually sank into neglect.

The third method is that of Painting with vitreous colours. First we see it in the shape of translucent enamel on relief. When the goldsmith attained high excellence,

as sculptor, chaser, engraver, and often as painter too, the rigid form, the absence of shading, and the flatness of the pieces of colour, were unsatisfactory. The ameliorating spirit of the coming *renaissance* suggested refinements. Precious metals took the place of copper; they were to be exhibited, and merely heightened by colour. The process is fully described by Benvenuto Cellini, in his 'Treatise on the Goldsmith's Art,' as that of the Byzantine method is by Theophilus, the writer of the 12th century. The design was chased in relieve, the whole surface being first of all covered, so that the colour floated into it lay thinnest on the high portions of the relief. True painting in enamel followed. The early part of the 15th century found the men of Limoges beginning to use the metal-plate as painters use their canvas. When the colours were applied thick, the full amount of light and shade was given; when thin, the ground appeared, and gave the varied effect of transparency. Thus the fold of drapery, or the foam of the sea-waves, was expressed by loading with pigment.

This great step, one would think, might have quickly revolutionised the art; and although only a few colours could be used where so great a degree of heat was applied, we might have expected to have seen works by this process vie with the tempera pictures of contemporary artists. Such was not the result; it was not till the great constellation of Italian artists of the beginning of the 16th century was passing away that the new spirit appears in enamels. Then indeed we find small panels, and scutcheons, large basins, chargers, cups, and objects of all kinds, covered with *renaissance* design, and overlaid with rich and brilliant painting. The talents of the artists were now exercised on a vast number of subjects, which present great variety, especially towards the close of the period. The Italians, invited



by Francis I., had a good deal of influence in effecting this change, and the publication of the classic grotesques by the school of Raphael, in numerous engravings, easily introduced into the ateliers, completed it. Cartoons were then prepared for them by Primaticcio, Il Rosso, and others; while the delightful productions of the engravers, German for the most part, to whom belongs the title of the Little Masters (*Petits Maîtres*), furnished still better subjects for their adaptation.

The 16th century and beginning of the 17th are accordingly the periods of greatest activity in the art of enamel. M. De Laborde enumerates more than 150 artists, all Frenchmen, and mostly belonging to that period.

About 1640, however, it began to give itself to portraiture in miniature: by-and-by it became restricted to the small size and new style applicable to that purpose, and gradually dwindled away, till it became all but extinct for the higher purposes of art. When oil painting had come into common use, enamel was no more wanted. Vitreous colours continued only to be used for earthenware, glass, and such like articles, whose exposure to the climate, or domestic usage, required them to be proof equally against heat and water.



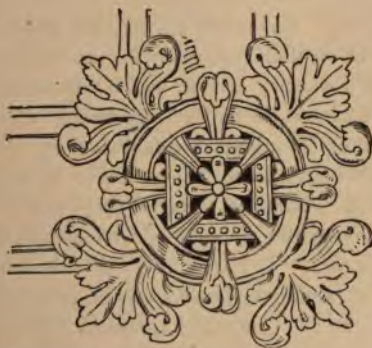
## LECTURE V.

## ILLUMINATION OF BOOKS.—PRINTING.

HAVING followed out the subject of Enamel Painting, I shall take up another of the arts mentioned in the last lecture, that of the Illumination of MSS., and follow it down till it died out before the application of Printing.

The Irish or Anglo-Hibernian style of ornamentation, a true growth of the West, did not long continue pure. Greek influence spread, and, combined as it was with great technical knowledge and skill in all the useful as well as ornamental arts, blended its acanthus foliage and architectural character with the meshes, and knots of animals, we have already described. In the first place, St. Austin, sent by St. Gregory to the pagans of Kent, brought a directly foreign influence into the south of England as early as the year 600; Théodore of Tarsus and others followed, so that it was only in Ireland and in the northern part of England that the pure native art continued to show itself. Missionaries were actually going out from these portions of the British Islands when Rome was sending others into Kent; and we must expect in that quarter, in the works of the versatile artist St. Dunstan, and others, a directly Byzantine character. At Canterbury an active school of illuminators was quickly formed, and also at Winchester and other places. The book called the Benedictional of St. Ethelwold, now in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire, is one of

the most splendid specimens of the Anglo-Saxon illumination. It was written in 960 to 980 by Godemann, a



Anglo-Saxon of Byzantine origin. Corners of Borders in the Benedictional of St. Ethelwold.

monk of St. Swithin, afterwards rewarded for his skill by being made Abbot of Thorney. The pages are surrounded by broad borders with large corner pieces, all of which are composed of particoloured conventional foliage. There

are also many figure subjects, 'many ornamental pictures,' as Godemann himself describes them in an introduction or dedication, 'made under elegantly decorated arches, filled with divers precious colours and gold.' The drawing in these works at once shows the Byzantine to have been the school of the artist; and they are very excellent for their age. Compared to them, for example, the illustrations of Cædmon's Paraphrase of Holy Writ, in the Bodleian, show the difference that existed between contemporary works to have been very great. Another book by Godemann, said to be the finest example of the art of that century, is now one of the treasures of the library of the city of Rouen.

Whether or not this style of Godemann, which is larger, broader, richer, and more purely foliated than contemporary ornamentation, is what was then called *Opus Anglicum*, it is difficult to say. Before his day English illuminators had become famous on the Continent. Alcuin, who was a priest of York, and a century earlier, had no doubt more knowledge of the native style than of any foreign manner; but, in the School of Illuminators established by Charlemagne under his superintendence, foliage is not by any means so exclusively the decorative material employed: so that we may allow the superior richness of Godemann's work to be a merit of his own. It was in 788 that this emperor published his celebrated constitution, and re-established public education among the Gauls and Germans. From this time dates the birth of letters in the middle ages, Alcuin himself leading the way. In the works of that old English worthy we have still the Latin sonnets he hung up in the scriptoria, admonishing the writers to spell properly, and to abstain from blots and from s, eaking evil words when writing good books. The greatest treasury of books of the Carlovingian

period is the Bibliothèque Impériale of Paris, but now and then one is seen by the public, and even offered for sale. The enthusiasm excited in 1836, when the Old Testament written by Alcuin in 800-801 was sold by auction at Evans's in London, was very great.\*

In the East the luxury and splendour of the age took a novel form in writing copies of the Scriptures. No expense of materials was thought sufficient, and while the books for altar-service or collections of homilies were made of vellum cleaned for second use, the Bible was frequently written throughout in gilt letters on leaves stained a beautiful purple. Not only in Greece, but throughout Europe, the works of the poets and purely classic writers, now anathematised as pagan, were carefully erased from the vellum, to receive the litanies and other stock-in-trade of the priest or monk. Whole libraries must have been used up in this way, and books so written are now frequently found, with the earlier writing still decipherable, holding out hopes of the recovery of some of the lost authors of the Roman time. To all documents or monuments twice used in this way the name of Palimpsests has been applied. And it is curious to remark that not only in books, but in all walks of art and in every age, palimpsests are to be found. The slabs of alabaster lining the halls of the Assyrian palaces, Mr. Layard found on detaching them from the walls, had been used long before the sculptures he coveted had been cut, as the sides built up were also carved. The brasses let into the sepulchral gravestones of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are often similarly engraved on the hidden sides.

The expense attending the production of MSS. at this early time must have been very great, and quite sufficient

\* It was bought by M. Giordet for 37,500 francs (£1500).



to account for the unlearned literati of the cloister using up Pliny or Livy for their Psalters and Hours. Yet the cost of materials was not greater than it must have been in classic times. M. Firmin Didot ingeniously calculates that a single leaf of papyrus must have cost at least 3*s.* 5*d.* (4*f.* 5*c.*); and Champollion, as quoted by M. Ferd. Denis in his work on Illumination, observes that Cicero himself, who spent so much on his library, writing to Trebatius, praising him for his industrious parsimony in that matter, asks him whether he has yet adopted the good plan of effacing his correspondents' letters to write the replies on the same leaves!

This cost of materials, perhaps as much as the labour of writing, contributed to make books generally unattainable in the middle ages. A single book splendidly illuminated and bound in gold clasps and jewelled boards was the treasure of the monastery of the largest size. Indeed such books only belonged to abbeys, to cathedrals, or to kings; they were not bought and sold, but acquired by the exchange of an estate or flock of cattle. Grécie, Countess of Anjou, is mentioned by M. Denis as paying for a book of homilies 200 sheep with their wool, besides a large quantity (un muid, about forty-five bushels) of wheat, barley, and millet, and three martens' furs.

Under Charlemagne and Alcuin the head-quarters of learning were in his capital, Aix-la-Chapelle; where and in Cologne architects from Lombardy were then busy. But schools of caligraphy sprang up immediately in many quarters, at Tours, Metz, Rheims, and St. Gall, and probably in Paris; other great caligraphic artists of the period, Gottschalck and Modestus, producing great and beautiful books, and commencing a series of French illuminations which did not cease till the 16th century. In

all Byzantine decoration gold forms an essential part, and for many ages the gilded grounds were continued, even when moveable pictures superseded walled decoration. The manuscript miniaturists of the middle ages used gold liberally, and were great adepts in the burnishing of the gilded surface, giving the greatest splendour to their pages.



French Miniature. Eleventh Century.

Charles the Bald was a worthy successor to Charlemagne in his love of the art of miniature-painting, and a book presented solemnly to him by the canons of St. Martin, written by Ingbert (Ingobertus), now in the Imperial Library of Paris, is a noble specimen of the excellence already attained in 866 by the scriptorium of Tours. Judith, the young stepmother of our Alfred the Great, was the daughter of Charles, and it was a book she carried with her into England, we may suppose, that so attracted the longing eyes of her husband's youngest son, as related by Asser, his

biographer. At the age of twelve, at which age he had not yet begun to read, Alfred and his brother, entering Judith's apartment, found her reading. The splendour of the pages struck the boys with wonder and delight; and, the queen promising to present it to the first who could read it, Alfred forthwith began that life of intellectual activity which made his reign one of the landmarks of English literary as well as political history.

The year 1000 seems by common consent to be considered the darkest moment in the night of the middle ages. The idea prevailing in the Church that the Day of Judgment was to take place 1000 years after the birth of our Lord was everywhere preached to the people, and in many places the terror rose to the pitch of suspending all activity. The cross was now adorned with the figure of Christ, expressing as vividly as possible the agony of the Passion; and a gloomy view of the Christian mysteries prevailed. The only traffic that continued brisk was one in relics and amulets, which perhaps began at this time to be carried about and vended for money, a trade which continues yet among the ignorant of the old Church.

In England the panic was not so great as on the Continent, and when the crisis passed the reaction of activity was not felt to the same extent. Everywhere abroad building recommenced with greater activity, but it was not till about 1150 that architecture began to express the true northern character of art, and the round lines of construction, so general in the Romanesque from door to cupola, gave place to the pointed and buttressed, with the addition of so many new features. Nor was it of course only in one art that such an essential change was operated. A fresh spirit invigorated all the fine arts, and in Illumination it is particularly obvious. The archaic form and character of the



figures disappear. The acanthus foliage with irregular foliations gives way to leafage cleft into the favourite symbolic number of three points; the meshes, knots, and interlacings are undone; and the whole and half pages of ornament are discontinued. All at once a great revolution takes place in the relation of the artist to nature; imagination shows herself, and ornamentation becomes free. Shortly after 1200 the endless varieties of the vegetable kingdom may be distinguished as furnishing the originals of beautifully designed capitals and borders, and the gold ground gives place to diaper patterns and blue.

The landscape background does not yet appear; but a century later, 1350, it begins to take the place of the diaper, and the complete picture is visible; the forerunner of the modern landscape schools of painting, which have for the first time in the history of the world worthily represented tree, mountain, and flood, sea and sky, with all 'the changes of the mighty mother's face.' The great initial letters, hitherto square and solid in general form, now shoot out, like an elegant plant throwing its long starred lines of roots to the bottom of the pages, and blossom and fibre along the top.

The century beginning about 1220 is the most active and flourishing period in the history of Pointed Architecture. In France the cathedrals of Chartres, Notre Dame of Paris, Laon, Rouen, Dijon, Amiens, Beauvais, Rheims, Auxerre, the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, and many other great works, were all rising at the same time. In England Salisbury Cathedral, York Minster except the choir, Westminster Abbey, and a great part of Wells, Ely, Lichfield, Winchester, and Exeter Cathedrals, belong to this age of prodigious architectural activity, during which the art of miniature-painting made nearly equal advances. France, and particu-



larly Paris, was distinguished in the art, which it appears from a passage in Dante was there only called Illuminating.\*

It is difficult to convey clear ideas of the changes through which the art passed, without coloured illustrations approaching somewhat to the perfection of the originals. The minuter divisions of the sub-

Radiateur Capita. Letter.  
(F. Denis.)

ject must therefore be left for the present, and I must confine myself to noting its principal changes. The diapers behind the figures were shortly afterwards traversed by folds in imitation of hangings, the use of tapestry as a covering for walls now coming into use, and the manufactories at Arras and elsewhere becoming important. About the same time, 1350, the figures themselves are not so severely outlined as formerly, and the colours and shadows are more softened and rounded. Nothing can be more delicate than the curling lines and foliage, with

\* Non se' tu Oderisi,  
L' onor d' Agobbio e l' onor di quell' arte  
Ch' alluminare è chiamata in Parisi?—*Purg.* xi.

'Art thou not Oderigi, the honour of Agobbio, and honour of that art which, in Paris, is called Illuminating?'

small birds and insects interspersed, that now appear round the initial pages.

Hitherto, down to about 1350, the production of books was the work of those who wanted them. The clergy, lawyers, and public schools had retainers employed in transcribing; the scriptorium in the larger monasteries being a principal scene of their labour. But a public trade in books had begun to a small extent, and the caligrapher and miniature-painter were independent artists and craftsmen long before 1400, when the middle ages give place to what we call modern times. In Italy, Giotto and Nicola Pisano had already passed away, the *renaissance* was initiated, and ready to develop itself, to the delight of the world, in the hands of the *quattrocentisti*. The illuminator of the day has left us many portraits of himself. He sits on a chair or stool before a solid desk with sloping top, having two receptacles for ink, red and black, sunk into it: the reed pen which the early writers used has given place to the quill, and in his left hand he holds a knife or bone instrument, wherewith he keeps the page flat under his writing. The space to be filled is circumscribed by a red line, and he leaves room for the vignette or picture, the artist being now quite distinct from the scribe. The labour of this individual was soon to be set aside by printing; and, oil painting introducing small pictures about the same time, both the manuscripts and their splendid illustrations were gradually discontinued, and at last laid by as antiquated curiosities.\*

\* Numerous instances might be given of this neglect. That of the *Evangelium of Charlemagne*, now in the Louvre, may be mentioned. It was written and illuminated by Gottschalk (Godescalcus), employing that illustrious monk seven years. The text is in double columns on a purple ground. The gift of the emperor to the

This neglect into which they fell prevailed until the revival of the study of antiquities, when the truth dawned on the learned that much of the domestic and popular history of our ancestors was recorded in them alone. The simplicity of mediæval ideas regarding history led the artists to content themselves in copying what they saw, and so to give every scene a contemporaneous character. In their little pictures, therefore, we find the costumes, arms, utensils, furniture, and even the customs and ceremonies, both civil and religious, of their epoch. Besides, in these books we have preserved a continuous series of illustrations of the state of art from the sixth century, showing us the development of painting, when all other sources of information are silent. The vellum and paper page lasts longer than the solid stone wall.

The production of a cheaper page for the scribe to exercise his pen upon, must have gradually had its influence in bringing about other innovations. Printing could never have been contemplated but for the previous existence of Paper. The earliest known specimens of paper made from rags 'are some documents of the year 1318, in the archives of the Hospital at Kaufbeuern,' says Eichhorn. 'The first German paper mill we have some account of worked at Nürnberg in 1390,' says Koch.\*

In the latest age of manuscript-painting, the men thus employed were the greatest artists of the period out of Italy.

monastery of St. Sernin at Toulouse, this inestimable monument of the eighth century had been preserved in a silver case or étui, till, the case being stolen, the book was cast among old parchments to be sold, in 1793. Saved by M. Puymaurin, it was afterwards presented by the city of Toulouse to Napoleon on the birth of the King of Rome.

\* We quote these authorities in the words of Mr. Carlyle, from *Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 432. 1839.



Their veracity and study of nature express a perfect freedom and mastery. The 'Hours of Anne of Brittany' is a collection of the loveliest pictures of flowers, fruits, and insects; and so true to nature that M. Denis calls the artist, Poyet, the greatest naturalist of the age. The historical subjects, too, then executed by the miniaturists, are quite equal to the best works of the Italian contemporary painters. As examples may be mentioned, because some of their pictures have been repeatedly engraved, and the originals themselves may be seen in the British Museum, the Chronicles of Froissart, and the Romance of the Rose, both largely and elaborately illustrated. These bring us to the period of the invention of engraving.

The earliest discovered impression from a woodcut is dated 1418; earlier specimens may yet be discovered, for the invention of stamping pictures made no way, nor did it touch the painter, till it was combined with types. The stamps from rude wood-blocks which first circulated in Holland and Germany were coarse and gaudily coloured, and were the people's pictures of the day, bought only to adorn the humble homes of artisan and trader. No one suspected that the further development of the process would sweep before it the scriptorium and the scribe, and revolutionise the whole structure of modern mind and manners.

Thus the production of beautiful miniatures continued long after this date. The Van Eycks and Memling employed themselves in this way at the beginning of their career, and in the library of Munich books are to be seen illustrated by the greatest artists of the German school, even down to Hans Holbein.

These cheap and coarse productions of the new process of stamping were the blockbooks, forerunners of the press and the moveable type. The *Biblia Pauperum* is one of



the earliest and most curious of these. It is not the Bible, as you may suppose, but a series of forty leaves of pictures from the Old and New Testaments, and received its name as being a help to the poor priest towards some insight into the great Book beyond his reach in a completer form. These leaves printed by friction are placed back to back, and pasted together so as to give the whole the appearance of a book printed on both sides of the paper. Each of these pages has three designs in a row within a sort of arcade; that in the centre being from the history of Christ, those on each side are from the Old Testament, representing parallel or typical incidents. For example, the Adoration of the Magi has on one side the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon, and on the other Abner visiting David. Above and below these three designs on each page, are similar arcades, with prophets in the central compartments and descriptions of all the subjects on each side.

Such books as these, stamped from blocks in the Chinese fashion, had but a short period of obscure existence. Printing by means of a press; the construction of the page by moveable types; the substitution of cast metal for wooden letters, and the consequent production of many of these from one matrix; were all steps necessary towards the perfecting of book-printing, and all taken nearly at the same time. But although it is certain these processes were all in operation in the middle of this century, beginning about 1440, it is not clearly ascertained by whom, where, or exactly when, the first triumph was attained.

Four names have principally figured in the controversy. Strasburg erects its colossal statue to Gutenberg in the market square, Mayence celebrates Faust, the town of Haarlem claims the discovery for its citizen and churchwarden Laurence Coster, and the obscurer village of

Gernsheim considers Schöffer entitled to honours equal to any of the others.

All these, except Coster, who died before he made any practical application of the art, were associated together in the production of the first books. Fust or Faust, however, is accused by a Dutch authority, Junius, of having stolen the invention from his master Coster, and it is then supposed he was aided by Gutenberg and Schöffer to make use of his theft. It is now pretty well agreed that Gutenberg began to print at Strasburg some time between the years 1436 and 1442. Perhaps he first printed blockbooks, or combined both the block and the moveable type, as seen in some so-called blockbooks. And of these mixed block and type books, the *Speculum Humanæ Salvationis*, the Looking-glass of Human Salvation, for example, has some portions of the reading cut in wood, besides many cast letters, plain, double, accented, or otherwise varied, amounting to no fewer than 156 distinct types, as shown by Mr. Otley. There is another hypothesis, that before he left Strasburg for his native town of Mayence he used moveable types of wood. At Mayence he entered into partnership with Fust; and Schöffer, who had married the daughter of that individual, is considered to have really brought to perfection the process of founding the types by means of the punch.

The first book jointly undertaken was the Latin vulgate, and the oldest historian of printing mentions that before twelve sheets were printed, Gutenberg, or rather we ought to say, Fust, had incurred an expense of 4000 florins. This Latin Bible, so interesting in the history even of the world, was long lost to collectors, and is now called the Mazarine Bible, because the first identified copy was found in the Bibliothèque Mazarine.

The new process was, it seems, kept secret, and the early copies sold in Paris as manuscripts. This may be a fable; but, whether or not, the secret spread like the influence of spring. The partners quarrelled in 1458; four years later, Mayence was stormed by Adolphus of Nassau, the workmen of the rival establishments dispersed, and the invention was carried into other lands. Twelve years after the same date, Caxton began printing in England, setting up his press in Westminster, and by the year 1530 it is computed there existed already 300 printing places in Europe.

This year, 1530, witnessed the ever-memorable reading of the confession of Augsburg at the diet there, before Charles V.; and already Columbus, Vasco de Gama, and others, had made the round of the world known to all men nearly thirty years before. In this year, 1530, Raphael and Da Vinci had been ten years dead, Albert Durer two years; so that we must suppose printed books may have been shown to them in their youth as the products of a new art, and admired as photographs are with us; but there were still living and working out their great destinies in their various Italian homes Michael Angelo, Titian, Sebastian del Piombo, Cellini, Andrea del Sarto, and Correggio. Tintoretto was a boy of twelve, and Paul Veronese in the nurse's arms.

It has of late become the fashion to decry the great movement in art known as the *renaissance*, and to praise the preceding ages with their narrow field and illiterate but naïve honesty. The Pointed Architecture that held a short reign of 300 years, after the noble round arch had developed into its dignified Lombard and Norman richness, is called, strangely enough, 'Christian architecture;' and there are not wanting persons wilful enough to advocate not only original illuminations, which may be again, of course,



made as beautiful as pictures on paper or canvas, but also the publishing of book illuminations by hand in these days of chromolithography. Such crotchets will have their day; public tastes change; by-and-by we shall see the Lombard become the fashion for church-builders; but in painting we must always return to the quattrocentisti and the earlier among the cinque-cento \* painters for noble and free development of thought and style.

A common mistake in relation to the *renaissance* is to suppose it to have sprung up from a revived study of the antique, whereas it was really a revived study of nature. Vasari, in his introduction to the second part of his *Biographies*, does not even mention the increased study of the antique among the means of improvement enjoyed by the artists of his second division. Giotto and his followers, he says, came much nearer nature than had been done before; he gave his figures easy attitudes, and expressed the spirit in the face. But in the artists of his second division, he continues, 'we see a still more effectual expression of feeling in the gestures and movements of the body, art seeking to approach the truth of nature by more correct design, and to exhibit so close a resemblance to the countenance of the living man that each figure might at once be recognised. Thus they constantly endeavoured to reproduce what they

\* It must be remembered that the terms *tre-*, *quattro-*, and *cinque-cento* do not correspond to our 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries, but to a century later, the *cinque-cento* artists living in the 1500. Even our mode of describing dates, as 15th century, &c., is very confusing, perhaps more so than the Italian. Sir Gardner Wilkinson in his last work (*Colour and Taste*) has adopted a new method, which would be a great improvement if brought into general use. He describes the 15th century as the 1400, and so on. In the present publication we have frequently followed his example.



beheld in nature, and no more.' The artist became ennobled as well as his art; he was an intellectual power, not merely the member of a guild pursuing a hereditary craft like the artist of the middle ages, or a monk, *perinde cadaver*, working mechanically. Touching and charming in their naïveté are all the works of the middle ages, on an imperfect acquaintance supremely so; but the more intimately we become acquainted with them, the more we comprehend and enter into the life in which they were produced, the more reason there appears to thank God for the *renaissance* in religion, in learning, and above all in art. Ghiberti, Masaccio, Brunelleschi, Mantegna, these are the great artists, not those who remained associated with the Gothic feeling, as Gozzoli, Angelico, or Francia. Without them the completeness of Raphael and the transcendent energy of Michael Angelo would have been trammelled and wasted. Later masters, the gladiatorial freedom of Tintoretto, the universality of Rubens, or the astonishing insight of Rembrandt, could only exist as the results or fruit of the emancipating labours of the artists of the *renaissance*.

The immediate change effected by printing was, however, at least apparently, adverse to the arts. Miniature-painting was superseded by the much less complete and coarser illustration by means of wood engraving. But when books ceased to be articles of luxury, and became common and useful, the engraver, both on wood and copper, became much more generally employed as an instructor associated with the text than ever the illuminator had been.

## LECTURE VI.

## ENGLISH DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE DOWN TO 1500.

IN these papers, and in every essay on the modern history of the arts, whether useful or ornamental, constant reference must be made to the building and furnishing of churches. Nearly all we know of the arts in the dark ages is through their service of the church, and the examples preserved to us from early times are with few exceptions objects connected with ceremonial. The clergy held the fine arts in their own hands, practised them or directed them. Our gratitude and admiration excited by this apparent aid to civilisation will be materially diminished when we find the arts were not extended to the people; that they, from the peasant to the baron, were wholly without the splendours of the church, the refinements of the clergy, or even the means of moral decency. At the present day, the traveller in Italy finds the great marble *Duomo* on a festival covered with rich hangings, and twenty or thirty priests splendidly robed, performing the service amidst a blaze of wax; and when he leaves the imposing scene he has to make his way through a swarm of beggars, old women with the immemorial and unimprovable distaff and spindle, old men but half clad, children scarcely clad at all. In the middle ages the contrast was

carried further. While the great minsters were rising in England, Durham, Peterborough, Norwich, and many others, the private houses were wood and mud thatched with straw; and even the royal and baronial mansions, which were stone and presented some of the enrichments of stone sculpture about doors and windows, were little better than a hall enclosed by four rough walls, the mud floor strewn with rushes, the openings for light closed with boards, and the building surrounded by wooden out-houses. While the monk had his own dish at the refectory table, and his own cell, the retainers of the baron ate many out of one dish, and slept on the floor together.

It is singular that among the few exceptions to the temporary character of the domestic architecture of the Norman period still remaining, more than one retains the traditional title of 'the Jew's House,' as if that people, not being amenable to the institutions of the country, were better prepared than the natives to avail themselves of the civilising arts.

The houses of the people before the Conquest are wholly unknown. Illuminations of that date, indeed, show many incidental examples of houses and their adjuncts, but it has been very well remarked by Mr. Hudson Turner, in his excellent book on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that the strict correctness to the artist's own period in the materials of his picture so valuable in later manuscripts, as well as the amount of ability to express himself intelligibly, are not found in the earliest works. We may be pretty certain, however, that when the Saxons took possession, very many Roman houses and even towns existed, and that these decayed without teaching them much. The general building material of the period was wood. Winchester, the capital city, at the time of the Conquest, consisted of six-



teen streets of low huts, closely packed together. It was the richest city in England, and contained the best artificers; goldsmiths being particularly numerous. These goldsmiths worked, but did not trade, in the precious metals, and no doubt carried on their craft in open booths or hutches; as in much latter times, even to the fifteenth century, they did on bridges and other thoroughfares in Paris and London.

London at this time could not be superior to Winchester, perhaps not equal to it, nor for centuries after is there any record of stone street houses: the wooden tenements continued one storey high, plastered within and without, and principally thatched. The Thane at the same time built his 'hall,' a word we still retain for a mansion, from the forest by the labour of his bondmen, and it also was thatched with straw or reeds, or roofed with wooden shingles. The Norman baron might have been expected to be superior to the Saxon as a builder, and besides he required more defence, yet his castellum was only defended by palisades and gates, and if his foundations were stone, the superstructure was wood, a mound of earth supporting a wooden watch-tower. This hall was a capacious apartment, serving in the day-time for the patriarchal hospitality of the owner, and forming at night a sort of stable for his servants, to whose rude accommodation the master's was not much superior in the adjoining chamber. The fire was kindled in the centre of the floor, and the smoke made its way out, at the door (which was large enough to allow a man to ride in), at the windows, or at the eaves of the thatch; and sometimes by an opening for the purpose immediately over the fire. The lord or prince and his 'hearth-men,' a significant term for friends and councillors, sat by the same fire at which their repast was cooked; and at night they



slept in his solar or chamber, a custom long continued in France, where, even in the fourteenth century, the king sometimes distinguished favoured courtiers by inviting them, one or more, to share his bed, or sleep in the same apartment. With the year 1100, fortresses entirely of stone begin to appear, but it is remarkable that domestic as well as military architecture in England was always a generation behind that of our nearest Continental neighbours.

It is not till near the end of the Norman period that the earliest of our Donjons or Castle-keeps of solid stone were erected; such as Dover, Rochester, Richmond in Yorkshire, and Newcastle; the latter two still well preserved, dating about 1170. These massive square towers divided into three or four floors, accessible by passages in the thickness of the wall, were succeeded by the Edwardian Castles with their huge round towers, of which Conway and others in Wales still afford us grand examples. But both of these structures were simply defensive. In the bailey or court-yard of that of Newcastle, which had already in sixty years fallen into disuse, we find the 'hall' and 'chamber' erected for the accommodation of royal visitors; and, as our business is with domestic architecture, I return to these.

The hall or great room stood simply by itself, its four strong walls unattached to other building; and, when of the largest size, a row of columns or piers divided it into a nave and aisles, giving support to the timbers of the roof. These columns were often of wood, but stone was also employed; and in accounts of the year 1176 relating to Henry II.'s hall at Clarendon they were even of marble. In some there appears to have been only one range of such supports extending longitudinally down the centre, rising to the ridge or crest of the roof.

At one end of this building, and transversely with it, was

a smaller 'house,' divided by a floor into two chambers, the 'cellar,' which was used for storing wood and other materials, and the 'solar' or bed-room, having no communication whatever with that below, but which was the private and choice apartment, and was entered either by a small stair from the dais or high end of the hall, or by an outside flight of steps. This single well-appointed chamber was the only one throughout a long period of our history, even in royal houses, and was resorted to at all times and for all purposes, except those of a public kind, or for meals. Thus in 1287, Edward I. and Queen Eleanor were sitting on their bed-side attended by the ladies of the court, when they narrowly escaped death by lightning. In many illuminations we find scenes taking place in the bed-room, such as that in Shaw's *Dresses and Decorations*, where Christine de Pisan presents her book to the French Queen, who occupies a sofa opposite the bed, the ladies of honour being seated round on stools. This is so late as 1400, when the room is hung round with cloth decorated with armorial bearings, which also appear on the furniture of the bed.

In smaller houses the chamber was over the hall, which in such cases was vaulted: the chamber being approached sometimes by an external stair only. That known as the Jew's House in the High Street of Lincoln is an often-quoted example of this kind, of the earliest time. The door is enriched by a moulding not common in English Norman work, and the chimney of the upper room is corbelled out, forming an external canopy over the doorway.

Previous to 1200 there is no evidence of glass windows having existed with us except in churches, and for a century and a half after that date the openings for light and air were closed by wooden shutters, lattices, fenestrals, in all but

noble residences. The 'round windows' in the ends of the hall were first filled with glass, and at the same time were provided with wooden shutters. Sometimes the upper half



Door and Chimney of Jew's House, Lincoln. Twelfth century.

of the upright window was glass, and the lower covered by a hinged shutter. When only a shutter was employed, it was made to open outward hinged to the top of the opening, and supported by props, so that it acted as an eave or a barge-board in carrying off the rain. The chimney in the 'solar' stood out on jambs or columns, or was supported on corbels over the fire-dogs, which were riveted into the hearth.

With regard to the interior appointments, there is no great amount of information. The inside of the walls was plastered, the finest material used then, as now, being plaster of Paris. A writer of the time says 'the private chamber should be covered with hangings to avoid flies and



spiders,' and curtains were used for partitioning off portions of the room and also for covering doorways and windows. In the 'King's Quair,' written by James I. of Scotland, about 1418, he says,

Right over thwert the chamber there was drawn  
A trevesse *thin and white*, all of pleasance,  
The which behind, &c.

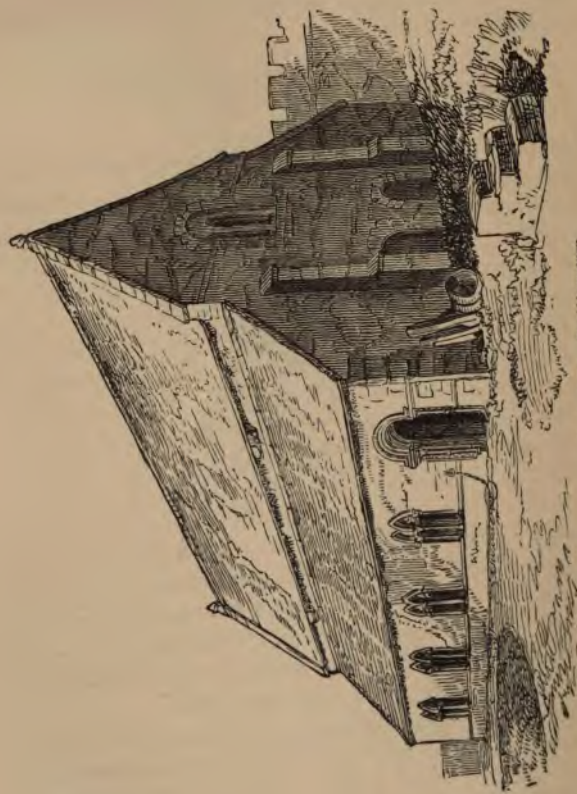
Hangings thus described must have been simply cloths of some kind; tapestry being a new manufacture, and 'Arras' not in use till about 1400, when that place extended its trade.\*

The great room (80½ feet by 26), called The Painted Chamber, used for a short time after the fire as the House of Lords, and now altogether removed, was ordered in 1236 to be painted 'in the manner of a curtain,' with a motto on the end wall;† and about thirty years later it is ordered to be painted in histories. The remains of these *histories*, which were from the Old Testament, the story of the Macabees, and others, were inspected and drawn by Charles Stothard. They went in six bands round the apartment, the lower band being narrow, like the Bayeux tapestry; the second broader, till the sixth and last was three times the width of the first; each picture having the subject inscribed in black letter below it. These pictures had no mixed tints, and scarcely any shades, but were done simply by an outline filled in with light pure colour.

\* The Bayeux tapestry was not meant for hangings. It is a strip of twenty inches broad by 214 feet in length, and was annually hung up round the nave of the church of Bayeux, on St. John's day only. This great example of needlework, it is almost certain, is not later than 1100; but it is an exceptional work, stood in place of painting, and throws little light on the early use of tapestry for walls.

† 'Ke ne dune ke ne tine, ne pre ke desire;' that is *Qui ne donne ce qu'il tient, ne prend ce qu'il désire*: Who gives not what he can will not get what he desires.





Hall of Oakham, Rutlandshire. Twelfth century.

Wainscoting was in partial use in this century, and is mentioned in royal residences and in the domestic buildings of monasteries. Some ornamental patterns seem to have been invented, which were coloured; the boards were to be 'radiated and coloured' in a chamber in Windsor Castle. Polychromatic decoration was undoubtedly practised, although of a simple kind. The court of Henry III. was thronged by Italians; some artists being among them, of whom William of Florence was the most distinguished. Almost all the chambers of this king (1216-1272) were painted a green colour, scintillated with stars of gold, and on this ground were painted histories from the Old and New Testaments.

Of course beside the hall and chamber there were many offices attached to extensive establishments, ordinarily constructed of timber. The principal of these, when the food ceased to be prepared in the hall, was the kitchen, with the fire in the centre and open chimney above. Then there were, the larder, the granary, &c., all separately planted down as convenient. These were connected together by passages and wooden galleries: the amount of luxury thus obtained is expressed in one case by the boast that the Queen could go from her chamber to the chapel with a dry foot.

Existing remains of this single hall and solar are enumerated in the 'Domestic Architecture of England, Edward I. to Richard II.,' by Hudson Turner and Parker, the principal being that called Oakham Castle, Rutlandshire, of 1180; the King's House, Southampton; that at Minster, Isle of Thanet, &c. Where visitors and members of a numerous family were accommodated does not appear; there must have been detached lodgings, but on occasion of all large meetings the neighbourhood of a monastery was absolutely necessary for the lodging of the individuals assembled.

The indiscriminate use of the hall as a dormitory continued for centuries after the immorality engendered by the practice had supplied themes for the ribald songs and tales of the people.

Although painting was applied to some interiors, *white-washing*, the reproach of modern churchwardens, was in immense repute, and continued to be so all through the middle ages. Whitewashing was the delight of the Edwardian period, as the united reigns of the three Edwards is called, the period which comprises the most complete and brilliant development of Pointed Architecture. Several writs are extant of Henry III., directing the chapel in the Tower to be whitewashed. Westminster Hall was whitewashed for the coronation of Edward I., and many other instances might be cited. It was during the Edwardian period that the Decorated style prevailed; the art was then in its highest perfection: previously it had been in progress, afterwards it began to decline. Sculpture, the most important handmaid to architecture, was then most skilful and pure, and the tracery of the time exhibits an unrivalled fidelity to nature; so much so, indeed, as to be by some thought to offend against the true principles of ornamentation, being direct rather than conventional in its imitation. The masonry of this period it is impossible to surpass in accuracy and firmness, and this excellence we find in the domestic as well as ecclesiastical buildings. Mr. Hudson Turner shows that the whitewash was applied to both, where painting could not be obtained. The stone and other rough materials were not allowed to appear; in fact the 'lamp of truth' was not burning so brightly, in that noonday of mediæval art, as to offend any one's love of cleanness. It is more proper to allude to this, since certain stereotyped terms of admiration are frequently applied to



the middle ages, calculated to convey quite wrong impressions of them in comparison with our great and powerful nineteenth century. Ignorant or indiscriminate admiration is folly. Combined with the works of even the best artists of the purer times of Italian art, great puerilities of decoration are to be seen, and wrong practices are to be found in many of the best periods of past art; did not the unapproachable sculptors of antiquity descend to glass eyes and other abominations? The more we investigate the middle ages, the less surprised we shall be to find whitewash one of their luxuries.

As we approach 1300, windows improve. In the Early English period they partake of the character of the style, being ordinarily divided into two lights by a mullion, and decorated externally by a drip moulding. But, though they are now found glazed in whole or part, especially in the ends of halls and the small lights of chambers, still glass continued, at this date, confined to royalty, or at least to noble mansions. Glass was imported from Flanders, and, being so fragile, was then very difficult of transport. There was so little of it in England at the comparatively late date 1386 (when Chaucer was writing), that there exists a writ empowering one Nick Hopewell to take and appropriate as much glass as he could find in four counties, for the mending of the windows of a chapel lately founded in honour of the king's mother. The first mention of English glass occurs in 1439, but its general use was not carried out for a century afterwards, and the custom of part of the window only being glazed, the lower portion being closed with wood, continued in outlying places till a recent date.

Referring again to the long reign of Henry III. (1216-1272), we hear of a room on the ground floor in Windsor Castle being 'boarded like a ship,' showing that such a thing



was strange. Paving tiles came into use in the same reign, both plain and decorated; but the great hall and the houses of the commonalty remained in their native clay or rough stone; the tables were 'fixed in the ground;' and, although the dais, which was raised a step for the great people, was tiled or otherwise covered, below the dais was called the 'marsh,' a term sufficiently graphic to show what it was in wet seasons. The tables were either fixed or on trestles; to 'lay the board' being in the latter case literally the process before the meal; and as the furniture was made by the carpenter, much of it being fixed in its place, we may suppose it was heavy and simple. The seats were mostly benches, the great seat in the centre of the dais, sometimes stone, being garnished with colour and gilding. Carpets were seen in the few specimens which Eleanor, the wife of Edward I., brought with her from Spain. The wall behind the dais was often wainscoted and painted. If hangings of any kind were used before 1300, they must have been needlework, and in very small quantities. In common houses one cup of horn or wood served the household, who ate from the same dish; and at high tables, king and queen, or husband and wife, often had but one dish. Spoons were always plentiful, and knives general, but forks very rare. Edward I. died in 1307, possessed of six silver and one gold fork.\*

\* On the occasion of a great robbery of the King's treasures at Westminster, while he was prosecuting the war in Scotland, quoted by Sir G. G. Scott, we hear of 'Six silver hanaps in an ambry, more than thirty silver spoons in another ambry, and mazer hanaps: also of pitchers and cups—a great pitcher *with stones*, and a cup with feet, a case of silver, with gold spoons, nine dishes with saucers, and two little pitchers of silver, besides spice dishes, jewels, crowns, girdles, &c.' No forks, it will be observed, are here mentioned.

Gardens at this period existed, but in no great splendour. Of our potherbs few are native to the soil; cabbage\* and onions, peas and beans, however, they had, and the flower garden possessed roses, lilies, sunflowers, violets, poppies, and gillyflowers, which last appear to have been then the most esteemed.

At the death of Edward I. mediæval architecture was in the middle of its best development—the Decorated style. During his reign the Early English forms may be observed intermingled with and giving way to the Decorated, which prevailed during the succeeding reigns of the second and third kings of the same name. Then, with the accession of Richard II., a new element shows itself, and the Perpendicular gradually stiffens the lines of construction and modifies the character of the ornaments. William of Wykeham, the greatest mediæval English architect with whose name we are familiar, was promoted to honours and emoluments in church and state, chiefly earned by his skill in rebuilding the royal palace of Windsor. In the general character of our domestic buildings this change in the art and the partial increase of commerce do not appear, little improvement taking place. Along the borders the Pele-towers and the older among the Castles belong to this time at the earliest. In the Pele-tower, the lower apartment was the stable, and the upper was reached by an external stair or ladder. In the more settled districts moated and partially fortified houses appeared: the moat

\* Some kind of cabbage at least. On the ledges of the rock on which the ruins of Tynemouth Priory stand, a wild cabbage is found, supposed to have been produced by the seed from the monks' garden above. From a correspondence in 'Notes and Queries,' however, it would appear that an improved cabbage was introduced into this country by Ashley in Queen Elizabeth's reign.

being crossed by a drawbridge, and palisades, sometimes painted of various colours, extended along the edge.

Street architecture now becomes very picturesque. The houses were very small, having doors under the height of a man, and rooms about eight or nine feet high, the streets narrow, formed by the gables of the houses, ornamented by barge-boards curiously carved. Roofs exhibited tiles or stone shingles, both of oval and oblong shapes. In stone fabrics corbie steps appear, particularly in Scotland, a fashion just then imported from Flanders. Pointing was in general use also, in fashion of an imitation of ashlar-work on the plaster surface of interior walls. The Londoners continued jealous of coal for fuel lest it should impair the purity of their whitewash, which appears to have been especially the pride of London. There was a civic law compelling even the thatch to be whitewashed; but this was probably a precaution against fire, a thick layer of plaster preventing in some measure ignition from falling sparks occasioned by wood fires. When coal succeeded wood as fuel, the white was varied by different colours on the houses, still mostly built of timber.

The roofs of halls were now of open timbers, and the floor of stone or tiles, though still strewn with straw or rushes. A small window surveyed the hall from the solar or chamber, and at the other end a screen carried a wooden gallery for musicians or ladies. The chimney was carried up externally, as a louvre over the centre, which, being gaily pinnacled, furnished a beautiful feature in the general design. We now find tapestry of Arras begin to appear, so that painted interiors had but a very short reign. In 1348 Sir John de Bernyngham receives for the princess Joan a hanging worked with popinjays and another with roses, and the Black Prince bequeaths to his son, afterwards Richard II., his hanging embroidered with swans having ladies'



heads and ostrich feathers; and to his wife he leaves those with griffins and eagles. These, probably needlework, were shortly after imitated in Norwich and London, and amongst Chaucer's *Canterbury Pilgrims* we find 'a Webber, a Dyer, and a Tapisier.' Fine pieces of tapestry were highly valued; that mentioned in the ancient romance of Guy, earl of Warwick,

In Warwick the truth shall ye see,  
In Arras wrought full craftily,

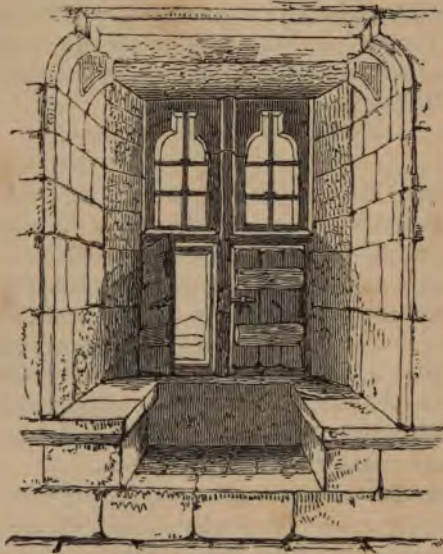
is mentioned also in a grant of Richard II., the king conveying the arras together with the castle. This and many will-records show how high the estimation was in which these tapestries were held, as pointed out by Hudson Turner. In travelling from place to place, noblemen carried their arras with them: it formed part of their baggage when they went into distant parts. The introduction of hangings and tapestry is indeed the grand feature of the latter half of the fourteenth century in internal decoration, the more massive furniture remaining much as it had been.

The usual manner of hanging this tapestry was on tenter-hooks simply against the rough wall, from which it could be easily taken down upon every removal. But not only hangings were carried about, beds and other furniture were also transported with the owners, and the glass windows were taken out, on the master or family leaving for a short time. This continued to be the custom down to a much later date. In the 'Survey of Alnwick Castle, 1567,' it is said: 'Because through extreme winds the glass of the windows doth decay and waste, it were good the whole leights of everie window at the departure of his lordshippe, and during the time of his lordship's absence, were taken down and laid up in safety.'\*

\* Preface, p. xvi., 'Northumberland Household Book,' edited by Bishop Percy. In the same place we find the following remarks: 'I



We now find several private chambers in one suite, the ladie's bed-room being poetically called her bower, and often



Window with Shutters and Seats Alnwick Castle, Northumberland, 1510.

pleasantly situated on the ground floor opening into the garden.\* Examples of the century ending 1400 are nume-

cannot avoid alluding to glass, not yet common in common houses. Our country houses, instead of glass, did use much lattice, and that made either of wicker or fine rifts of oke in chequer wise. As horn in the windows is now quite laid down in every place, so our lattices are also grown into less use, because glass is come to be so plentiful.'

\* See Mr. Parker's work, from which many particulars in this Lecture are derived. In Dr. Prior's Danish Ballads, lately published, the ladie's bower is described in many passages as at the top of the castle, up 'the high bower stair,' whence the country could

rous: some of them being great Castles, like Raby in Yorkshire; others Moated Granges or Manors, like that called The Mout at Ightham, Kent, where the water still surrounds the house; and a few are simply the Hall, as in the older examples, a parallelogram like a barn, with Decorated windows. By the close of the century, however, the Hall was often elevated over cellarage; and in the beginning of the 1400, a small apartment is separated from it called the 'privie parlour,' where the lord and lady preferred dining by themselves. This is seen at Wanswell Court, Gloucestershire, where the 'privie parlour' is added to the end of the Hall. Few houses in towns have survived. The bargeboards and carved timbers in the work by the elder Pugin are very beautiful and interesting, although a little later. As noble and interesting examples of the baronial fortified mansion of the beginning of the 1400, may be particularly mentioned Berkeley Castle, and Warkworth Castle, Northumberland, which latter has been partially repaired.

#### 1400 to 1500.

The change from the Decorated to that which, from the profusion and multiplicity of its details, has been called the Florid, and from the vertical character of its mullions and panel-work the Perpendicular, took place simultaneously with a considerable advance in material civilisation. The learning of the schools was falling into disrepute; towns were becoming more important; industrial arts more varied, the guilds having their places of meeting; banks and public

be seen all round. But what are we to make of the description in the Scotch ballad, "The Bórder Widow"—

'My love he built me a bonnie bower,  
And thatched it a' with lillie flower.'

Are these lines a proof that the ballad is a late production?

posts were heard of, and commerce became more active; Sir Richard Whittington and William Canyng of Bristol are examples of mercantile prosperity of that day; block-printing began. The advance is to be observed more in the interior appointments than in the architecture. All the metals were used, and textile fabrics were more plentiful for furniture purposes, and in adding to the comfort and luxury of town life. The enlargement of windows in ecclesiastical buildings was followed by a similar expansion in those of a secular description, the church and the house still retaining a common resemblance in this respect, although very soon the immense size of the windows in cathedrals and great churches left all competition behind. The west end of Winchester Cathedral is entirely window, from immediately above the doorway to the groining, divided by eight perpendicular mullions. That of King's College chapel at Cambridge resembles it, having the same number of divisions. Such halls as that of Wolsey at Hampton Court endeavour after a certain rivalry with churches in the height of their openings; but in ordinary houses where windows could not rise, the roofs being very low in all cases where houses were built in storeys—and street houses now contained three or four—they spread out laterally, often nearly from end to end of the room, divided by many mullions of stone or wood, according to the material of which the entire building was composed.

Glass was now more general in towns, although very rough, and green in hue, and leaded together in small pieces; the casements opening by hinges, and the wall within furnishing a seat. The Porch is now an important feature, at first belonging to the church exclusively, forming a beautiful and useful adjunct. In country houses the rushes remained on the floor, and also in large or public apart-



ments; but the burgess and merchant, as well as the noble, had now wainscot and hangings, and even carpets. Hostels or Inns began shortly before Chaucer's time;\* they were soon more numerous and better appointed. 'Panelling,' says Mr. Rickman, 'is the grand source of ornament in this style;' and in this respect, wainscot, in every one of the remaining examples, shows its natural affinity with the Perpendicular, a form of Gothic essentially and exclusively English, possessing many excellences. 'Heartily,' says Professor Willis, 'may we congratulate ourselves upon it, when we compare it with the sister styles of France and Germany.'

Heraldry forms a conspicuous element of decoration in the Perpendicular, particularly over porches, chimney-pieces, and elsewhere, especially in civic buildings; and the carved gables with large barge-boards are now in their fullest development. The revival of the use of bricks belongs to this period, and indeed forms one of the most interesting and important events in its history. Bricks are indeed mentioned in the middle ages in England, but they seem to have been like Roman tiles, flat rather than cubic, and never to have been either of much service or in great demand. As we approach 1500, and enter the Tudor period, we find many large edifices built of moulded brick; Hurstmonceux, Tattershall, Oxburgh Hall; Westow Hall, Suffolk; this last, built by the Duke of Suffolk, who married the widow of Louis XII., sister of Henry VIII., has a fine gate-house with lofty octagonal turrets much ornamented; and by-and-by we find the introduction of this new material, the Flemish brick, effect a comprehensive revolution in architecture.

Within, the improvement of furniture went on. Still wood was almost exclusively the material for utensils, and

\* Chaucer died in 1400.



horn for cups and spoons, except where gold or silver could be obtained.

Well ye know, a lord in his household  
Ne hath not every vessel all of gold,  
Some ben of tree.

CHAUCER.

The Venetian trade would introduce a few glass cups, but earthenware was as yet unknown. Carved furniture began to be sought after and valued; but it was not till the reign of Queen Elizabeth was drawing to a close that wood carving in this country attained variety and excellence. The following century, the century of the Stuarts, comprehends the date of nearly all the carved furniture ever made in England. Statuary sculpture rose to great excellence. Yet was there undoubtedly a total absence of capability to appreciate, and disposition to cherish, the higher branches of the arts. Flaxman says of some of the sculptures of this time, those on the chantry of Henry V., 'They are bold and characteristic, furious and warlike; the standing figures have a natural sentiment in their actions and a simple grandeur in their draperies, such as we admire in Masaccio and Raphael.' The altar-tomb of Richard Earl Beauchamp, in his chapel at Warwick, is surrounded by small bronzes, executed by William Austen. Of these, the same good authority says, 'They are not to be excelled by anything of the kind done in Italy at the same time, although Donatello and Ghiberti were living when this tomb was executed in 1439.' 'In Italy,' remarks the editor of Knight's Pictorial History, 'Austen would have founded a school, and his name would have been co-extensive with the history of the art. In England his name is preserved from oblivion only by the existence of the contract which secures the performance of his work, and the record of the payment of 13s. 4d. each for these beautiful statues.'

## LECTURE VII.

## TOMBS AND MONUMENTS.

THE history of the past is more fully illustrated by its architectural remains than by those of the other arts; and the constructions for the disposal of the dead are particularly instructive. The first requirement is a shelter for the living; but, from the very first escape out of savage life, the dead were treated with reverence, and all the constructive powers of the dawning civilisation directed to their use. The higher the civilisation, the less is this the case; the Tomb diminishes in consequence as fortress-building, church-building, palace-building, increase; it is then changed into the Monument, and the illustrious of the age are commemorated without care for the body or its grave.

Except the monolithic temples or circles of vertical undressed stones, such as that at Stonehenge, the only records now existing of our British ancestors are the barrows or mounds of earth covering their graves. These have been opened in immense numbers, and generally with some result more or less rewarding the labour of the excavator. In the formation of Chatham lines, nearly a century ago, about 200 of these tumuli were opened, and a description of them furnished the subject of Douglas' '*Næniæ Britannicæ.*' Succeeding populations followed the same mode of

sepulture, so that it becomes difficult to distinguish the British tomb from the Danish, Saxon, or even Roman; as the latter people, while in this country, seem to have paid little attention to their dead, Roman vases and urns having been found promiscuously with the entire skeleton in the stone coffin, containing also remains of the objects most valued by the deceased.

In the imperial city itself, in the times of the Cæsars, burning the dead with perfumes and ceremonial processions was the universal custom, except with slaves, as we have seen, their bodies being simply carted to the less frequented places, or to the catacombs, and there left. After incremation, the ashes were collected and carefully preserved in urns; large buildings, with the entire interior wall honey-combed into rows of niches, being prepared by great patrician families for their reception. Columbaria, or dovescotes, the name given to these buildings, sufficiently describes their interior aspects. Those who did not possess such adjuncts raised detached monuments; and as cemeteries are Christian, and no areas were then appropriated to the dead, these tombs were planted in gardens or along highways. The roads leading into the cities of ancient Italy were consequently lined on both sides by these multiform monuments: the Appian Way, for example, was thus covered for many miles before reaching Rome; and at Pompeii the number of these erections still remaining has given the approach to the city the name of the Street of Tombs. Sometimes colossal structures were raised in this manner, the largest of which is the mausoleum of Hadrian in Rome (A.D. 117-139), now called the Castle of St. Angelo. Architecture under this building emperor assumed a character of great solidity and prodigious size; the tomb he erected for himself is quite Egyptian in character, and large enough



to have been converted into a strong fortress, while the bridge raised at its approach is, at this day, called the bridge of St. Angelo, and is the best preserved of all the ancient bridges of Rome.

In the Etruscan tombs, which date many centuries before the Cæsars, many beautiful objects of early art have been found. The Princess of Canino is said to have gone to a ball resplendent in the costly ornaments found in one of these tombs. About 2000 have now been examined, and from these have been obtained upwards of 5000 painted terra cottas and vases; an immense quantity of other articles of almost every description; military weapons, tripods and sacrificial utensils, candelabra of all patterns and dimensions, sarcophagi, couches, sculptures; together with the most exquisite articles of personal decoration. But the Romans expended their kindness to the dead mainly at the ceremony of the burning of the body, throwing on the pile not only the valuables of the deceased, but other offerings, and also small vessels with precious oils and perfumes. Hence the Roman tombs are more barren to the explorer than those of native tribes in our own country, as it remained the custom of the Britons, Danes, and Saxons, even after they were Christianised, to bury with the dead the objects most valued by them. In some cases, indeed, this habit continued all through the middle ages; crowns were deposited with kings, bishops were interred in their apparels, with their crosiers, or rather crosiers made for the purpose were placed beside them.

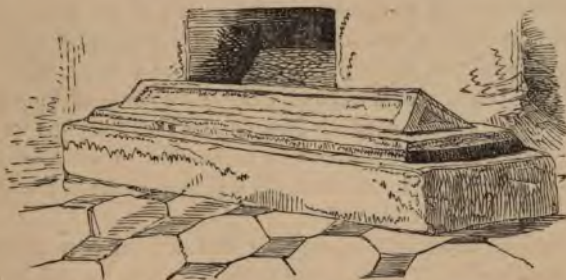
The shapes of the early barrows or tumuli are very various. About thirteen different forms have been classified. Perhaps the exact form was a matter of taste, and not indicative either of different nations or of rank. They are bell-shaped, conical, and oblong; sometimes surrounded by a



fosse or hollow, or, very rarely, by a circle of upright stones: there is also a form called the twin barrow, consisting of two conical mounds with a fosse. All these, generally speaking, have a kistvaen, or chamber fashioned by large stones; sometimes many of them. Pennant mentions as many as seventeen kistvaens or stone chests with bodies found under one cairn. The size of the mound appears to have varied according to the importance of the individual. The largest by a great deal is that called Silbury Hill, close to the immense circle of stones at Avebury, in Wiltshire, the most extensive of all our so-called Druidical temples. Near this temple are many barrows, but one in particular has excited the wonder and admiration of historians: Stukely, who was the first to call attention to our early grave-monuments, going so far as to say, 'I have no scruple to affirm it is the most magnificent mausoleum in the world, not even excepting the Egyptian pyramids!' This is ridiculous; but Silbury Hill is a work of prodigious labour, being, according to a surveyor in Sir R. C. Hoare's 'Ancient Wiltshire,' 2027 feet in circumference near the base, diameter of the table-land on the top 120, sloping height 316 feet, perpendicular height 120: the whole occupying five acres and thirty-four perches of land.

The first form of stone sepulchres we find in England, considerably later than any of the mounds, is simply the hollowed-out parallelogram of stone with prism-shaped lid. The custom of *interring* or burying under the earth is not earlier with us than the eighth century, the body being in earlier times laid on the ground, and the earth heaped over it; it is, therefore, clear that commemorative tombstones could not exist till afterwards. The habit of surrounding the church by a graveyard, customary from the first in southern Christian communities, is said to have been in-

roduced into this country in 750, the graves being very little sunk and the lid of the stone coffin appearing above the ground. This lid soon began to be decorated, but the mass of people undoubtedly had no enclosure of any kind. Matthew Paris, so late as 1195, blames the Abbot of St. Alban's for ordering that none of the monks should be buried merely wrapped in cloth, but that each should have a stone chest. Flat slabs were also in use to cover



Tomb of King Rufus, Winchester: died 1100.

the remains, and these were invariably carved from the eleventh century down to the Decorated period, and exhibited an endless variety of design in the long-shafted cross with foliated head, which formed their invariable embellishment. Generally this cross is the only sculpture, no record of the dead appearing, except certain symbols placed on either side of the shaft; a sword generally being placed for a man, the shears, or key, or both, for a woman, a chalice for a priest; the arms only, and that of course confined to the later portion of the period above named, distinguishing the dead. The beauty of the design of these crosses is sometimes very great, and the variety

endless; in no two cases has the same form been observed, although the number scattered about in village churches amounts to many hundreds. In Northumberland alone, I have been told, there may be 120 still extant.

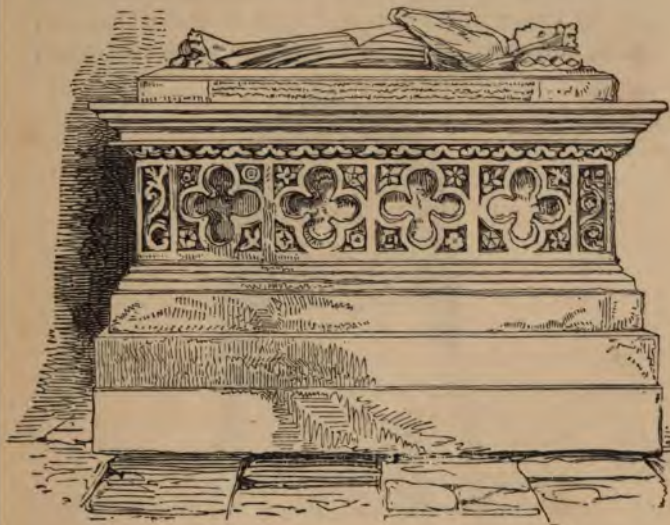
The variety found on these grave crosses is found also on every other stone carving or other decoration in the middle ages. The reason of this apparent profusion of invention is a more prosaic one than the admirer of these times would like to assign, being simply this; that the artist-workmen who executed the details of buildings, the patterns on tiles, &c., made no sketches, perhaps never had either paper or pencil in their fingers, and so could only repeat 'from the head,' and execute by 'rule of thumb.' Even the master-architect drew in the very roughest way, and with a writing-instrument, as we find in the Sketch-book of Villars de Honcourt, the architect of the thirteenth century, lately published.

In the thirteenth century we find several new monumental forms. The engraved brass sunk into the slab, and the raised or altar-tomb, bearing an effigy or recumbent statue, begin to appear; and we have thenceforward a succession of beautiful Gothic inventions, until the huge catafalque in stone or marble, erected in the mixed debased style of those of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary of Scots in Westminster, fills the centre of the chapel or aisle.

All through the middle ages the bodies of saints, or such as claimed any particular reverence or worship, were enshrined in raised tombs forming altars, and on these the eucharist was celebrated. This practice, which perhaps is to be traced back to the catacombs, originated the altar-tomb, which became common to people of distinction, and was erected between the piers of the nave, against the wall of aisle or chancel, or even in the centre, close to the steps



to the sanctum. When inserted into the wall, a canopy was necessarily suggested, and the enriched canopy presents a very beautiful feature in many of these monuments.



Altar-tomb, Queen Berengaria, at Mans. About 1250.

At first the altar-tomb was flat on the top, as we might expect from its derivation. At first, too, the sculptors were unable to overcome the difficulties of representing the deceased, although standing figures of admirable character and beauty, such as those in Chartres Cathedral, or the two statues called Clovis I. and Queen Clotilda, preserved from the old Church of Notre Dame de Corbeil, and placed at the entrance of the vaults of St. Denis, show that sculpture attained a large measure of power very early in the



middle ages. At the end of the twelfth century the simplicity and noble feeling of the monumental statues are sufficient to place them high in the history of art. In some cases, too, the portraiture is evidently faithful, such as the strong square face and body of Richard Cœur de Lion, in Rouen (1199). The beauty of the female statues



Queen Eleanor, 1290.

of the same time is pure and charming, the long figure being fully draped in regular folds. But, while the expression and sentiment are so admirable, the invention is restricted. At first the warrior holds his sword and shield; the lady, sometimes also the male figure, supports the left hand by holding the necklace or chain, as in the effigy of Queen Eleanor; but these varieties shortly disappear, and the invariable attitude is that of prayer. In Mr. Boutell's work on engraved brasses, out of perhaps two hundred ex-

amples ranging in date from 1277 to 1570, not more than half a dozen show any other action than that of both palms pressed together over the breast; and the exceptions are for the most part where a knight and lady lie side by side, the right hands clasped together, when the difficulty of disposing of the remaining left seems to have been too much for the artist. The particular action we have mentioned as expressive of prayer, may have been suggested by the form of swearing fealty in the middle ages. The vassal knelt before his sovereign, placed his two palms together, and presented his two hands thus joined to his superior. The same action prevails among priests at certain portions of the Mass.\*

Another peculiarity in the attitudes of male figures has occasioned considerable controversy. Many, both in sculpture and engraved on brass, in every county in England, have the legs thrown across each other—a difficult position to represent, and considered by many writers to have had a particular meaning, the knights so represented having been in many cases identified as Crusaders, or soldiers of the Cross initiated in the military fraternities. The surmise, however, that all knights so represented had visited the Holy Land, has not stood the test of investigation. Another supposition was that the attitude was intended to express the sign of our faith: it may be so; or perhaps it was only an alternative resorted to by the sculptor to vary his treatment of a recumbent figure under certain conditions. This last explanation is certainly a likely one, and I believe any artist looking at these figures would require no other.

\* The action of the palms pressed together is undoubtedly that of submission rather than prayer. The ancients expressed supplication by the arms extended; that the early Christians did the same is shown by the figures painted in the Catacombs called 'Orantes.'

The altar-tomb in complete development, with the sides divided into six or eight canopied niches filled with small statues, and supporting the praying effigies of the long-robed lady and her mailed husband, in marble or alabaster, gilt or painted, angels at their heads, and lions or little dogs at their feet, was a beautiful addition to the Decorated interior. When, however, the engraved brass let into the slab came fully into use, the convenience of a monument which did not interrupt the thoroughfare must have recommended it to general use. Out of England it was comparatively little adopted, although a few of the English brasses are recognised as of Flemish workmanship. In Germany some good specimens have been found, and in Belgium also; in Scotland not one, but the metal may have been there picked out when every kind of middle-age work was looked upon as superstitious, as in France they are known to have been destroyed for the sake of the metal at various periods of the history of that country. The earliest recorded example of monumental brass-work in England is the long-lost memorial of Simon de Beauchamp, who died about 1208, and was buried at the foot of the high altar in St. Paul's, Bedford. His epitaph only was made in brass, each letter being separately inserted into the stone. The next is much later, about 1242. In 1246 we find the complete portrait of Richard de Berking, Abbot of Westminster, *in pontificalibus*, was inserted over his grave, with a label bearing an inscription. The earliest still existing is that of Sir John d'Aubernoun, A.D. 1277, in a small church in Surrey.\* From this time down to the year 1600 or 1630 we find an uninterrupted succession of engraved effigies; the earliest the best, and the latest

\* These particulars are derived from Mr. Boutell's work on 'Monumental Brasses.'



the worst—so bad indeed as to become unworthy of notice. The metal employed was that denominated *latten*, a compound somewhat resembling brass, but more costly and more durable; many of the earlier specimens being still nearly as perfect as at the first. Sometimes in the heraldry a white metal like pewter was used for *argent*, and other colours were expressed either by the direction of the shading lines, or by enamels.

But to return to the more noble architectural and sculptured monuments. We find that the figures, whether of bronze, marble, or stone, were tintured and gilt, to represent nature as nearly as possible, the back of the niche and the canopy being also painted; the sculptures of the Gothic period rejoicing in colour as well as those of antiquity. In some instances corbels, representing angels issuing from the wall, preserve the remains of gilding on the hair, and white and blue enamel colours appear in the eyes. In Westminster Abbey, our greatest storehouse of historical monuments, remains of painting are everywhere visible, beginning at the shrine of Edward the Confessor, erected by Henry III., and the tomb of that king, with its panels of porphyry and recumbent gilt statue. At the foot of this monument is another of grey marble, bearing one of the most beautiful examples of sculpture in England, the statue of Eleanor, queen of Edward I. The large stone coffin of her mighty husband is also here, and was opened by the Society of Antiquaries in 1774, when the body was found to measure six feet two inches, and lay wrapped in two robes, one of gold and silver tissue, the other crimson velvet; a sceptre was in each hand, measuring nearly five feet in length, and the crown was still upon his head, after five centuries and a half. Close at hand is also the tomb of Philippa, wife of Edward III., one of the noblest, both



in the portrait sculpture of the statue and in general design, as at first erected. The brazen statuettes of the kings, princes, and others, her relatives, originally belonging to it, must have had a gorgeous effect against the black marble of which it is composed. Except the tomb itself, no public commemorative monuments existed in the middle



Queen Philippa, died 1369.



Edward III., died 1377.

Westminster Abbey.

ages. Memorials of battles and other events took the shape of crosses. The structures for shelter or for municipal proclamations in the market-places took this form. When Edward I. recorded the stages of the mournful procession to Queen Eleanor's grave, he erected crosses. These so-called crosses, of which that at the village of Gaddington is still very perfect,\* were among the most lovely works of the

\* At Waltham also the Cross remains, and has been lately 'restored.'

Decorated period, about the middle of that called in Mr. Rickman's table the Middle English, 1300. Tall and slender, the Gaddington 'cross,' at about a third of its elevation, opens out into a canopy for statues, the pinnacles of the divisions of the canopy uniting into a sheaf above. Of late, monuments of this species have been revived in Oxford and in Edinburgh, in those to the Martyrs and to Sir Walter Scott, who did so much to bring archæology into fashion.

As an example of the canopied tomb, which in course of time became much elaborated, that of Aymer de Valence, 1334, may be pointed out. Instead of a single arch, we soon find three or four small arches introduced, which, with the supporting columns, enclosed the figures on the tomb, giving the whole the character of a shrine or chapel. This, in a constructive point of view, affords a transitional step to the large and lofty isolated masses of the Renaissance period termed catafalques.

On the funerals of princes, benefactors to the Church, or indeed of anyone whose friends will pay for it, a temporary pageant is erected in the centre of the church in Roman Catholic countries, lit by candles and serenaded at stated times. This thing of boards, gilt paper, and black and white cloth, glorious in the eyes of supernumerary ecclesiastics, is a species of 'art-manufacture' to which I have no goodwill, as the very day after my first visit to St. Mark's this hideous theatrical spectre rose in the centre, destroying entirely the general view, and vulgarising that reverend and gorgeous interior, all the remainder of my stay in Venice. The general resemblance of the insulated and lofty monuments of the Renaissance betrays their origin, and shows them to be the perpetuation in marble of these ostentatious funeral pageants.

In France stupendous examples of these may be seen at St. Denis. Especially memorable is that of Louis XII. and his queen, from which our schools of art are furnished with a number of casts of the alabaster pilasters of the lower portion. Very beautiful in execution, the design of the whole and of the several parts is exuberant and astonishing; the elevation being divided into two stages, the lower occupied by *pallida mors*, two recumbent figures in all the horrors of the grave, the higher by a king and queen in royal robes, reading us a strange and exceptional moral on the richness of life and the ugliness of death.

In England we have very few works of this description; those of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary may be therefore again referred to as examples. Altar-tombs still appeared in the time of James I., but the statue, instead of being entirely recumbent and in the attitude of prayer, was represented resting on his elbow or leaning his head on his hand.

Princes' images on their tombs

Do not lie, as they were wont, seeming to pray  
Up to heaven; but with their cheeks upon their hands,  
As if they died of the toothache. They are not  
Carved with their eyes fixed on the stars; but, as  
Their minds were wholly bent upon the world,  
The self-same way they seem to turn their faces—

says Webster in the 'Duchess of Malfi,' with a full perception of the 'pride of state' inherent in the Renaissance. The style characteristic of the period, however, was the wall monument, supported by huge consoles or brackets, displaying the head of the family kneeling at prayers, his wife behind him in the same attitude, followed by the family, diminishing according to their ages. These portrait figures are generally painted; the dresses being black, with white ruffs and crimson hat-bands. Combined with



this processional group we find the passion for allegories and emblems suddenly rampant, and always presenting the same stale materials—Time, Death, Cupids, or juvenile angels with hour-glasses, and so forth.

In Italy wall or façade monuments are to be found of immense elaboration and size, consisting of several orders of columns with pediments, niches, statues, curtains, and clouds of marble; these *macchine colossali* showing sometimes equestrian statues larger than life high up against the side wall of a church, or a whole Olympus of virtues and vices. These are, however, in many cases purely commemorative, as the dust of the magnificos they celebrate does not repose within them, nor in any place indicated by them. The Church of Giovanni e Paolo in Venice is loaded by these monuments. Italy is the great storehouse of monuments of the 1500 and 1600. The first bronze equestrian statue of modern times was that of Erasmo da Narni, called Gattamelata, a commander of 'free lances' in the service of Venice; the senate of which city employed Donatello to execute the statue now standing in Padua. This was shortly followed by that of Bartolommeo Colleoni, by Andrea Verocchio, a Florentine born in 1432, which statue, standing on a decorated pedestal before the above-named church of Giovanni e Paolo, is one of the noblest and most impressive in the world.\*

In the Cappella dei Depositi attached to the church of San Lorenzo in Florence, a building raised for their reception, are to be seen the most notable 'monuments' in the history of the arts. The chapel is octagonal, small, lofty,

\* Verocchio was the master of Leonardo da Vinci and Perugino, and more desirous of excelling in painting than in sculpture. He was the first, it is said, to take the features of the human face, in a mould of plaster, from the life.



and very plain, in the revived classic taste, built of marble; the tombs of Lorenzo and Julian de' Medici standing against the north and south walls opposite to each other. Both are awful and inexplicable sculptures, statues of ambitious, dark-minded, magnificent men, supported each by two typical recumbent figures, which may represent Night and Day, but are quite as expressive of agony and repose; works whose very incompleteness and obscurity add to their impressiveness. They are dominating and tyrannous, like the men they celebrate, and refuse to answer to the questions of the critic. In the church of Santa Croce, Michelangelo himself lies, having, as the story goes, chosen his own resting-place, because thence, when the great door was open, could be seen Brunelleschi's cathedral dome. Three statues of the greater arts, Architecture, Painting, and Sculpture, appear as mourners, and their relative position is said to have been a matter of controversy, as it was difficult to determine in which art the great master most excelled.

In Verona, a city less rich than any others in the north of Italy, no monument attracts the traveller more than the tombs of the Scaligers, standing in a huge group above him as he passes along towards the church of Santa Maria l'Antica. They are surrounded by an open trellis of quatrefoil iron-work. The most ancient are only sarcophagi; the later, elaborate erections of several stages, the earliest and most striking of their kind. That of Can Grande, who died in 1329, forms a species of porch to the church. The tomb or sarcophagus itself rests on the backs of mastiff dogs, a pun on the name Can Grande. Above this, again, supported on columns, rests a pyramid, on which stands the statue of the warrior in full armour mounted on his war-horse! Three of these bizarre but striking towers rise together, each surmounted by warriors on horseback. The

latest, that of Can Signorio (died 1375), whose most earnest passion in his last days was the erection of an unrivalled tomb, rises to four stages, and exhibits not only emblematic virtues, but six warrior saints; this was both designed and sculptured by Bonino di Campilione. Italian Gothic has a constructive resemblance to true Gothic more than a similarity in detail; in these tombs, the Romanesque, the Pointed, and an imitation of the Classic, are blended, Corinthianised Gothic columns, Roman entablatures, trefoil and quatrefoil ornaments. Nothing can exceed their extravagance, says Mr. Hope; nothing also can more surprise and arrest attention.

In the church of the Frari in Venice lie Titian and Canova. A plain slab marked the grave of the painter until lately, and the imposing design, now the monument of the sculptor, was originally intended by him for Titian. It was, however, first adopted for the Archduchess Christina, and at last reproduced for himself. It represents a vast pyramid of white marble, in the centre of which bronze doors are open. Into these, the doors of the grave, a funeral procession is pressing, and you recognise Genius, Art, and other impersonations, among the finest productions of the master. The monument to Titian has since been added, of corresponding size and elaboration, the two works standing opposite to each other.

The Renaissance has been mentioned as exhibiting itself in the ostentatious catafalque and in the absurd posture of the effigy. Unspeakably monstrous are many of its monumental achievements.\* Take, for an example, the following

\* It may be remarked here, that some forms in Renaissance ornament were not innovations, but Italian peculiarities. The *oval* panel for example, oval being always from an early date the form of shield of arms in Italy.

description of that of the Doge John Pesaro, made in 1669, after the Renaissance had done its work and fallen into premature senility:—‘It is to be observed that we have passed over a considerable interval of time; we are now in the latter half of the seventeenth century; the progress of corruption has been incessant, and sculpture has here lost its taste and learning as well as its feeling. The monument is a huge accumulation of theatrical scenery in marble; four colossal negro caryatides, grinning and horrible, with faces of black marble and white eyes, sustain the first story of it; above this, two monsters, long-necked, half-dog and half-dragon, sustain an ornamental sarcophagus, on the top of which the full-length statue of the Doge, in robes of state, stands forward with its arms extended like an actor courting applause, under a huge canopy of metal like the roof of a bed, painted crimson and gold: on each side of him are sitting figures of genii, and unintelligible personifications gesticulating in Roman armour; below, between the negro caryatides, are two ghastly figures in bronze, half corse half skeleton, carrying tablets on which is written the eulogium in large letters graven in gold. . . . We have here at last the horrible images of death in violent contrast with the defiant monument which pretends to bring the resurrection down to earth—“hic revixit” on the tablet; and it seems impossible for false taste and base feeling to sink lower.’\*

But, however bad in principle are many of the features of the Renaissance, the spirit that had worked the change

\* This description does not even go so far as it might do in pointing out the puerilities and monstrosities of the original. The negroes, for instance, are represented as clad in white but tattered garments, their black knees and elbows projecting through the rents!



was an emancipating spirit. Can anything be richer in decoration and finer in carving, yet less impressive or in worse taste as the tomb of a priest, than the monument to Cardinal d'Amboise in the Cathedral of Rouen? and yet, if we consider it fully, we must find that new conditions of art life are here: a certain pursuit of beauty for its own sake, however wrongly felt; freedom of invention at least; as well as ostentation in the whole work, and flattery cringing about its members, making Faith, Charity, Prudence, and all the rest of them, assist in the decoration of the pedestal of a man who would have scorned such adulation when alive, and who said to the monk attending him when dying, 'Brother John! ah, why have I not all my life been only brother John!' Previously to this much-disputed Renaissance, the altar-tomb stereotyped in form, and the statue in the same conventional eternal attitude, prevailed for centuries; the brass and the sculpture, the flat and the elevated, exhibiting the same crocketed canopy, the same unvarying pose. It seemed as if art had narrowly escaped, in the West, the fate that had pressed the life out of it and embalmed it in the East, when the angel descended and stirred the waters—perhaps both a bad and a good angel at the same moment; and, even if so, I am not sure we should wish it had been otherwise.

But the truth is, there is a mistake abroad; the Renaissance in art generally being identified with the over-decorated quasi-classic restoration in architecture and ornament that supervened on the complete abandonment of traditional forms. The true revival (or *rinascimento*), however, was long before, and is to be seen in Nicola Pisano and Ghiberti, and in the statue of Colleoni by Verocchio.

The elevation of the ancient Egyptian obelisks in Rome and the erection of public monuments to great men was a



portion of the movement. Statues have now multiplied all over Europe, every city or state decorating its central places by this visible respect paid to the illustrious who have adorned its history; even principles are now so commemorated—the acquisition of political liberties or passing of free-trade laws in the more enlightened countries, or the official elevation of the Blessed Virgin Mary into a heaven-born goddess by the retrograde party in Rome.\*

At first and during the best time the portrait statue showed the man as he lived; the invariable custom in earlier tomb sculpture, and the manner dictated by common sense and feeling. But as the antique became more and more studied, admired, and servilely imitated, the dogma that the naked alone was worthy of the sculptor, and that costume should be limited to the toga and Roman armour, took possession of public taste: a pedantic doctrine destructive of the vitality of the art, and destroying utterly the characteristics so essential to portrait sculpture. Michelangelo lent his weight to this, the wrong side of the question; not that he contemplated its general adoption by weaklings, generation after generation; indeed that which was suitable to the *terribil via* of his hand was therefore unlikely to be fitted for common men. The adoption of subjects from classic story also aided in removing sculpture from living sympathies. For centuries we had nothing else, and the portrait statues of our kings appeared in the Roman cuirass with bare arms and knees, and our statesmen in the chlamys and toga. One last step only was wanting—to adopt the ideal antique and abandon clothing

\* A column crowned by a female figure treading on the moon, with an inscription to the honour of Pio Nono and the Blessed Virgin, has been very lately erected in the Piazza di Spagna!

altogether; and this was very nearly accomplished towards the close of last century. Canova's statue of Napoleon, now in Apsley House, is absolutely naked; and the statue to Samuel Johnson in St. Paul's is almost undraped, the single loose covering being thrown so as to be only useful for the sculptor's supposed artistic purposes— a ludicrous spectacle in a simply rational point of view; the stout old gentleman, as he leans his head on his hand in his nakedness, seeming to be saying to himself, 'What a sad pass things have come to with me at last, standing before the public in a state of nature!' A more correct criticism and a better taste now prevail. Yet the difficulty is not entirely met, and perhaps never can be till the artist has some power over the costume of his day, not to follow but to lead it. But, when we consider that the Greeks and Romans represented their heroes as they lived, and also their ladies and even the gods, the statues of the goddesses being clad very much in the fashion of the Athenian women, it is clear the poetic fiction our modern quasi-classic sculptors have indulged in has slender authority, and forfeits truth for a professional antiquarianism.

James Watt, by Chantrey, is a very good example of portrait sculpture, although only a compromise in the matter of costume; voluminous drapery which might however be a mantle or a professor's gown, covering one portion of the hard, intractable modern dress. Chantrey had the least invention of any man who ever left a good name in art, and this very barrenness saved him from those defects that prevent the surpassing ability of French statuary from being always solidly excellent. His monument in Lichfield to two children, so often engraved, was designed by Stothard. Flaxman was our greatest sculptor. But the art has but a feeble hold on our public taste, and

the popular ignorance regarding it remains profound. Sir Gardner Wilkinson remarks that people laugh at the pig-tail wig of the George III. at Charing Cross without being able to give a reason, at the same time that they are insensible to the excellence of that statue. A few years ago the equestrian Wellington was planted on the arch at Hyde Park, not advancing to meet you as you approach in front, as all groups surmounting triumphal arches ought to do, but sideways; and, although thousands joined in the outcry that followed, few comprehended the mistake.

## LECTURE VIII.

## WORKING IN METALS: BRONZE, IRON, LEAD.

It is now the custom of antiquarians to divide the prehistoric period in the infancy of nations into the Stone period, the Bronze, and the Iron period. These are illustrated by remains found in the soil, in estuaries, or morasses, and more particularly in graves; the custom of burying weapons, tools, utensils, or ornaments, having been nearly universal, as already mentioned in the last Lecture.

The Stone period is the indefinite lapse of ages antecedent to the preparation of any metal, and the remains are of the rudest description; being nearly confined to stone hatchet-heads, flint arrow-heads, and such like, with, perhaps, the stump of a tree very imperfectly hollowed, the boats of this age having been generally baskets lined with hides. With this long and obscure lapse of time art history has little to do.

The second division, the Bronze period, is fertile in remains; that mixed metal, which in many countries long preceded iron for all purposes of war or peace, being excellently adapted for preservation. Bronze is a mixture of copper and tin, two metals found near or on the surface, easily recognised as metals, and not difficult of fusion. By mixing the two, a much harder substance is formed



infinitely more useful as a material of which tools may be manufactured than either of its separate components. The commencement of the third, the Iron period, is properly considered, at least as far as the western European nations are concerned, as the beginning of civilisation, and it has been asserted that any modern people, however advanced in the arts of peace, would revert to barbarism if deprived of iron and steel. The guild of hammermen have for their motto—

By hammer and hand  
All arts do stand.

If iron were withdrawn, not only would hammer and chisel, axe and knife, saw and plane, be lost, but everything built or fabricated must go with them. The curious enquiry whether the Egyptians had steel tools, and to what extent the Greeks and even the Romans used iron, has not been brought to any satisfactory conclusion. But the paucity of iron in these ancient centres of civilisation undoubtedly indicates a narrow boundary to have circumscribed the higher conditions of refined life, the masses in these countries having been always slaves. The remains of iron-work of a very early date are rare; rust destroys it so completely, in moist places especially, that very few objects of interest made of the metal itself remain, while its effects on contemporary constructions and fabricated objects of every kind of material prove that the new and most powerful weapon was then in the workman's hand.

Such is the division of early times now in use by antiquarians; but it is certain that stone weapons and tools must have continued all through the bronze period, and that all three materials would be in use together at a later epoch; iron, bronze, and stone being most probably employed by different classes or for different purposes.

The Islands of Britain are mentioned by Herodotus 450 years before our era as the Cassiterides, or tin islands; and this appellation, still applied in the age of Augustus, seems to have designated the south part of England, under the mistaken idea of its being composed of islands. Cornwall more particularly was intended—rich in the production of tin ever since the early days of Phœnician commerce down to the present increased demand for tea-kettles; although now there is little picked up in the stream-works, and the mines are in some places driven far under the sea. These stream-works are drains or excavations open to the air, and coursed by a run of water, in which the tin is obtained by washing—a process somewhat like the gold-finding operations we have heard so much of lately. In these cuttings pickaxes of holm, boxwood, and hart's horn, have been found—evidences of ancient usage.

Of the working of these mines there is not much history; none at all in the Saxon ages. Under the Norman rule they produced vast revenues; Camden says, at that time Europe was not supplied with tin from any other place. Edmund, the younger brother of Henry III., framed the Stannary Laws, which regulated the immunities and imposts, afterwards confirmed, with liberties and privileges, by Edward III. Thus it appears that from the earliest record down to the end of the Norman period, the produce of the Cornwall mines was exported; and, we may presume, had no very decided effect on the arts of the country generally, its admixture with copper not having been practised. Although the same locality now affords the greater portion of the copper used by us, it was not known to exist there in ancient times. 'The history of Cornish copper,' says Mr. Warner, 'is as a mushroom of last night compared to that of tin. Lying deep below the surface in that country,

it escaped detection till such time as natural philosophy had made considerable progress; for, notwithstanding tin in Cornwall seldom runs deeper than fifty fathoms, good copper is rarely found at a less depth than that.

In Scandinavian graves of remote ages, innumerable weapons and other objects of copper have been found. Many of these are now in the Museum of Copenhagen—curious knives, daggers, swords, buckles, and implements of husbandry, mostly of copper, but some of gold edged with iron, showing the value attached to the latter article. Bronze swords and celts, as a certain form of axe-head has been called, have been found in this country in great numbers, and also the stone moulds out of which they have been cast. These are supposed of British manufacture. They may, however, have been the result of Roman instruction, as Cæsar says expressly that the Britons made use of imported copper; but, as he says in the next sentence that they had very little iron, his evidence must be taken with caution. The compounds of copper, it is certain, do not play so important a part in our antiquities as they do in those of other countries; the uses of later times only make them important to us—the casting of bells, cannon, and, latest of all, of statuary. During the latter part of the sixteenth and earlier half of the seventeenth centuries immense quantities were consumed in the making of cannon and in the celebrating of the Charleses and Jameses of blessed memory, as well as William III., by equestrian and other statues: so much was then used that the writer of the volume on Metals in the Cabinet Cyclopædia says, ‘that century of English history ought to be termed the age of bronze.’ Latterly, the great improvements in iron manufacture have made the founding of bronze ordnance almost an extinct art.



The earliest use of metal for statuary in this country appears to have been in the thirteenth century. The recumbent monumental figure of Henry III. (1273) and that of Eleanor, queen of Edward I. (1298), before spoken of, are the earliest: they are made of the mixed yellow metal called *latten*, and were executed by Master William Torel. The next in date, that of Valence, Earl of Pembroke (1304), also in Westminster, formed of oak cased with copper, was the work of one of the enamellers of Limoges, Magister Johannes de Limogiâ. That of the Black Prince, in Canterbury, a little later in date (1376), is one of the finest examples we have: it is of latten cast and chased. Whose work it was we do not know; but those of Richard II. and Anne of Bohemia, in Westminster (1395), were by Englishmen—Nicholas Broker and Godfrey Prest, citizens and coppersmiths of London. William Austen, the admirable sculptor of the Beauchamp tomb, is styled citizen and founder.

All these were undoubtedly originally covered with gilding and painting or enamelling, in the gorgeous spirit of the fourteenth century. Not till long after was the metal left in its native colour; perhaps not till the first years of Henry VIII., when Torrigiano was employed on the large bronze tomb of the king's father Henry VII., and the admirable example of Tudor-Gothic was rising at the end of Westminster Abbey for its accommodation.

The statue of Charles I., now standing at Charing Cross, is said to have been the first equestrian monument erected in this country. The incidents connected with its history are well known, but curious enough to be mentioned again. It was cast by a Frenchman in 1633, seven years after the coronation of the unfortunate king; but, not having been placed upon its pedestal before the breaking out of



the civil war, it was laid aside, and in a year or two sold with other court-property at auction by the Parliament with strict orders that it should be broken to pieces. Revats a brazier in Holborn, purchased it, and advertised knife-handles and other things made of the metal. He, in fact, caused articles to be made and exposed for sale at his shop as relics, and thus made his fortune; but after the Restoration he produced the statue, king and horse complete, from under ground, where it had lain concealed; and it was then erected where it now stands, Grinling Gibbons decorating the pedestal.

An equestrian statue of James II., executed for New-castle by an artist named Sarson, under the direction of Sir Christopher Wren, at a cost of 800*l.*, a large sum then, did not fare so well. At the revolution of 1688, on the declaration of the town for the Prince of Orange, a riot ensued. The statue was attacked by the mob, thrown down, and hauled by ropes over the quay into the Tyne. Afterwards it was raised from the water and converted into bells, two rival parishes petitioning for shares; and, no doubt, we yet hear these relics of King James on a Sunday morning, or at the workman's closing hour of six, more musical to him than Memnon.

Visitors to Chantrey's studio and foundry at Pimlico used to be struck by the pile of great brazen ordnance consigned for transmutation into statuary, quite as much as by the line of illustrious busts and large models of the sculptor. The statue of Achilles in Hyde Park—which is a repetition of one of the two antique figures the horses belonging to which give the name to the Monte Cavallo in Rome—was cast from captured cannon. But the greatest trophy of this kind, of modern days, is the column in the Place Vendôme, in Paris; the whole shaft being covered

by relieves in bronze, encircling it similarly to the Trajan column, and surmounted by the well-known figure of Napoleon, all cast from cannon taken at Austerlitz. Great as the quantity of metal required must have been, it appears twenty pieces were to spare, and these were converted into beams for the machinery of the Mint, with the word 'Austerlitz' stamped upon them. Of the conversion of church bells and other works of peace into cannon again, we have many examples. At the first great French revolution, when Christianity was considered effete by many both among priests and people, the church bells in some provinces were quickly converted into heavy guns, and sent rolling along the highways to meet Brunswick and the invaders.

The ancient artists used bronze very much; and the number of vessels, cups, pots, caldrons, and such like, still turned up, of Roman manufacture, shows how much it entered into domestic life, as also do the lamps, balances, and little articles of all sorts. For statuary it was highly valued in the Greek colonies as well as in Italy. The colossal statue of Apollo as the Sun, at Rhodes, is the largest on record. It was seventy Roman cubits (one foot and a half each) in height, and being thrown down by an earthquake shortly after its erection, was allowed to lie prostrate where it fell. After eight centuries, and comparatively in modern times, it was bought from the Saracens by a Jew merchant of Edessa, who is said to have loaded 900 camels with the brass—a statement which Gibbon repudiates as an exaggeration. It is indeed difficult to imagine such a train of beasts of burden loaded from the remains of one statue; but a possible solution of the difficulty has been found in the suggestion that the merchant bargained for all the bronze remains in the place, which were probably numerous.

The next largest bronze ever completed belongs to our own day. It is the typical figure of Bavaria, by Schwanthaler,



The Bavaria and the Ruhmeshalle. Munich.

erected in Munich, one of the surprising creations of King Ludwig. She stands on a pavement to which you ascend by a broad flight of steps; a Doric colonnade, the Ruhmeshalle or Fame-temple, forming the background to the pedestal, the goddess herself rising quite over the architecture. I remember visiting it on a beautiful evening when the haymakers were turning the mown grass in the field beneath, while the upper part of the statue only received the light of the sun fading away from lower objects. The visitor is furnished with a candle to ascend the stone stairs in the pedestal, and then he mounts an iron staircase of fifty-four steps within the statue, lit by latched and hinged openings in the wall of bronze, invisible externally. Having reached



the shoulders, he finds a chamber in the head furnished with a seat on each side, easily accommodating six people. Here the visitor rests a few moments, and from a small window in the hair descries the Tyrolese Alps, a deeply serrated blue line in the distance. There are many who say size is of little consequence in works of art; do not believe them. Simplicity becomes sublimity when united to grand proportions; gigantic size in a noble work ensures the conviction that great mechanic power is the proper servant of intellectual power. In the Bavaria this power is united with great composure, and we feel that here *right* is certainly *might*.

The third historical use of bronze I have mentioned is bell-making; an interesting subject of enquiry. Small bells were used in ancient houses, and were rung when the baths were ready, and for many other purposes; but the names given to the great bells introduced to call the worshippers together in the early Christian churches, *nolæ* and *campanæ*, are both supposed to indicate the place where church-bells were first used by Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, in Campania. They were very soon introduced into this country. Bede has several curious references to them, showing that bells, both large and small, were in use here as early as 670. The missionary saints seem to have carried bells. That of the Irish missionary, St. Gall, is still preserved in the place named after him in Switzerland; and St. Patrick's is now in private hands in Belfast, enclosed in a remarkable case of runic ornamentation. Both of these bells are parallelograms, not circles, in the form of their opening. In the dark ages bells began to be venerated as possessing power to drive away evil spirits. They were baptized and named with great ceremony by bishops. The *couvre-feu* or curfew, mistakenly said to have been a mark of sub-



jugation by the Normans, was common all over Europe, and must have acted as an excellent regulation against fire when houses were made of straw and wood. The passing-bell was a later clerical introduction, intended to give the public notice that some one was dying or just dead, and to invite the charitable to give an alms of prayer.

The largest bell yet made in this country is that recently placed in the tower of the new Houses of Parliament, and so badly made that it has already been twice broken; but even it is but a small undertaking compared to many bells in the world; especially, it is said, in China, and certainly in Russia, where occasionally they have been made so large that they have never been hung nor perhaps ever sounded. The largest of these is one which lies broken in its original bed in the Kremlin of Moscow, nearly twenty times the weight of our heaviest, being 443,772 lb. in weight, 67½ feet in circumference, and worth 66,000*l.* as old metal at 3*s.* a pound.

Before the present improvement of hanging bells for domestic purposes was brought into use, about a century ago, the small handbell which stood on the table was a favourite subject for the talents of the ornamentist. They were often of silver, or with an admixture of precious metal, and elaborately chased in the Renaissance period. At this time knockers were first introduced, and on some house-doors in the old towns of Italy may still be seen elaborate pieces of design and of casting in this shape. In our own country knockers were much later: it is not many years since the 'rasp' might be seen remaining, half-rusted away but still remaining, upon the doors of once fashionable houses in old city localities. This rasp was a piece of iron affixed by both its ends perpendicularly to the wood,

the inner edge of the iron deeply serrated, and a heavy ring or two hung loosely attached. These rings being rattled up and down the serrated edge, caused a noise, not the most musical certainly, but sufficient to be heard within.

Although brass is the most valuable compound metal, and has performed, in its various forms of bronze, bell metal, gun metal, and so on, a very important part in the history of both fine and useful arts, there are others which ought to be mentioned. The most notable of these is Pewter, a compound of one part of copper to about twenty of tin. This beautiful and easily worked composition, now never seen except as a beer measure hanging on the rails of a doubtful London locality, was once the material of all the plates and dishes that adorned the houses of England. In the Household Book of the Duke of Northumberland, in the time of Henry VIII., we find the inventory of the butlery to comprise 'two basins and two ewers, one ale pot and two wine pots, two dozen of trenchers, five chargers, seventeen platters, two dozen dishes, sixteen saucers, two plates, a washing basin, a salt, and a bottle for water,' and every one of pewter. Even in the memory of people still living, pewter was in use on the dinner-table, and shone bright on the shelves of the kitchen. All this has been banished by the potter, whose ware has attained so high a pitch of excellence combined with cheapness that no other material has any chance with it. The revolution thus indicated is one of the most important to all classes of the community. How great is the change since the time when the possession of a Moorish glass, such as that preserved by the Musgraves of Cumberland, called the 'Luck of Eden Hall,' was important enough to have a legend and a superstition all to itself! when it was considered so

wonderful as to be superhuman, stolen from the fairies, who called after the mounted knight who carried it off:

If the cup shall break or fall,  
Farewell the luck of Eden Hall!

Then earthenware was quite unknown, and glass vessels very rare; now both are common to every household, and porcelain dishes only half the price of wooden ones.

Pewter was the first metal used for engraving, it is said. Perhaps it might be selected for economy and ease of execution, but its extreme softness must have early rendered it unavailing, and I am very certain, judging from the fineness of Albert Dürer's work, that he never used it to any extent, as it has been reported he did. Music, however, continued to be printed from pewter plates, not engraved, but stamped by means of punches—a practice not yet abandoned, though printing music by moveable types has become general.

At an early time lead was used also, both for useful and ornamental work. The fonts in two churches in Gloucestershire, Llancaut and Tidenham, apparently cast out of the same mould, are supposed by Mr. Ormerod to be as early as the tenth century. Besides these there are many other leaden fonts of ancient character scattered about the country, as well as others decorated with leaden figures of the Apostles.

#### IRON.

Iron, as has been already remarked, is by far the most important of the metals, and is also the most difficult to procure and prepare, the iron-stone having little indication of the pure ore to suggest its value. Sometimes iron in a pure state has been found, but in very exceptional and



rare cases. The armour of the ancients was brazen, and the weapons of the common soldiers also, down to a comparatively late date before our era. Whether Homer was acquainted with iron at all is a question among his commentators; although Hesiod, about the same time, along with the golden, silver, and brazen, mentions the iron age. Whether iron was worked in Britain at the Roman conquest of the island is also doubtful, although Cæsar says rings of iron were circulated as money. If so, they might have come in exchange in commerce; rings of gold used for a similar purpose were certainly in circulation. Of what metal the swords or scythes were made, with which the axles of the native chariots were armed, does not appear. But it is quite certain our iron-works were in active operation immediately after the Roman settlement, as Roman coins and pieces of 'Samian' ware have been found under, and mixed with, the cinder heaps or accumulations of scoria in the forest of Dean, in Sussex, and in the neighbourhood of Bradford, Wilts. Hadrian entered Britain in the year 120, and Scrivenor, in his 'History of the Iron Trade,' supposes it probable that the Fabrica, or great military forge, was established at Bath in the following year. Manufactories of arms had been then lately introduced as part of the Roman system, and must have been found highly advantageous, as they were planted in such parts of subjugated provinces as presented abundance of iron. These Fabricæ were organised colonies or *colleges* of armourers. The army smiths working in these factories were formed into companies, each governed by a head; the business of these companies being to make arms for the legion to which they were attached. The arms so made, when not required for distribution, were piled up in adjacent arsenals. Each armourer had a stipend settled upon



him, and was not allowed to leave the colony, having a stigma or mark burned into his arm on becoming a member of the *Fabrica*. Nothing escaped the quick sight of these civilised invaders; and although, after four centuries of rule, the Romans left Britain little the better for their refinements, while in possession they appear to have been actively employed in many arts connected with metals. Coining was carried on in several places; they tried for gold by breaking up the quartz now lying in enormous mounds near Lampeter; silver they also found, and pigs of lead stamped with Roman names have frequently been recovered in Derbyshire and elsewhere. Four such pigs of British lead were found at Pulborough, in Sussex, in 1824.

The first distinct mention of native iron-works is in the Domesday Book, as the itinerary and inventory of all the lands and townships, with their proprietors and possessors, made by order of William the Conqueror, was called. In this record the city of Gloucester was required to pay royal tribute in the shape of iron—36 dicars of iron, 10 bars to a dicar, and 100 iron rods for nails or bolts. Shortly afterwards iron and steel began to be imported from Germany and other countries; ‘the German merchants of the Steelyard,’ of whom we now hear, are thought to have been traders in these metals, dealing at a place so called. The defensive armour of the period made in various parts of Europe was constructed of fine steel rings, woven together to fit the body closely, and admirably tempered; the helmets being caps of polished plate, to the edge of which ring mail for the neck was attached. Plate armour for other parts of the body was just beginning to be introduced. In the public records of this country, which contain an infinity of curious matter, we find some

notices of iron worth extracting. In the thirteenth year of Edward II., the Sheriff of Surrey and Sussex is ordered to provide horse-shoes and nails for the expedition against the Scots; 3,000 horse-shoes and 29,000 nails, in all costing 14*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.*, not creative of a ruinous war budget, one would say. A little later, in 1327, we hear of cannon, supposed to have been then first used in this country by Edward III. in his invasion of Scotland. These were made of banded iron, till the invention of gun-metal much improved the weapon about the middle of the fifteenth century. Still importation increased, not only of the material, but of manufactured articles of all sorts, and an act of parliament was at last procured by the hammermen of London and other towns, in 1483, prohibiting the importation of 'knives; hangers; tailors' shears, scissors, and irons; fire-forks; gridirons; stockblocks, keys, hinges, and garnets; spurs, bits, and stirrups; buckler-chains; latten nails with iron shanks; buckles for shoes; shears; iron wire; candlesticks, and grates.'

At this time, and until much later, there were no iron-works in the north of England; nor was coal used in smelting till towards the latter part of the seventeenth century. Sussex was one of the principal seats of production; and there the enterprise maintained itself with difficulty against the popular fear of precipitating the ruin of the country by burning up all the timber, so that no more ships could be built. The decay of iron by rust preventing antiquities in that metal being preserved, as already noticed, the earliest existing example of our cast-metal is not older than 1350: it is a grave-slab ornamented with a cross, and bearing the epitaph, 'Orate p. annema Ihone Coline,'—'Pray for the soul of Joan Collins,' a record of the early Sussex iron-works. There are many andirons

or firedogs, as the supports for the billets of wood before the use of grates and coals were called, still existing, of very good design, on the hall hearths in that and the neighbouring counties. These are sometimes of fantastic forms; figures, or merely pillars bearing coats of arms. To find excellent art, however, in connection with either hammered or cast iron, we must go abroad. Nearly opposite the great door in the west end of Antwerp cathedral is a draw-well, covered by a broken and renewed canopy of Gothic tracery in iron, at which every one looks with interest, even when no Antwerpener *fräuleins*, in their neat caps and bodices, chance to be about it. This is the work of Quintin Matsys at the age of twenty, before he saw the spirited maiden who would only marry a painter. Matsys, so runs the story, took her at her word. He was an artist already; he soon became a painter, and one of the best of the earlier Flemish school; living with his wife happily till the age of sixty-nine, when he died, in 1529, and the tablet was placed to his memory at the west door of the cathedral with the inscription, 'Connubialis Amor de Mulcibre fecit Apellem: ' Connubial love made Vulcan into Apelles.

This specimen, curious from its history, is nothing as art compared to much one sees in the shape of chancel or chapel screens, hinges, locks and scutcheons on doors (p. 146), and so forth, comparatively undistinguished. The shrine of St. Sebald, in the church of the same saint at Nürnberg, is a great casket in bronze, designed in the richest late Gothic and free design by Peter Vischer and his sons. In the same church, and in others in Nürnberg, as well as elsewhere in Franconia, may be seen much ornament of beaten iron of great beauty, especially candelabra decorated by imitations of flowers, *eisen-blumen*, admired and preserved with as much respect as any other work of art. Bronze is, however, here



in the old Franconian towns, as in Italy, the material generally employed by the artist. The mixed metals produce much finer castings, and are much more easily finished by hand; and the softer they are, like the composition, prin-



Peter Vischer, by himself. On St. Sebald's Shrine.

cipally of zinc, employing so largely the ingenuity of the Parisian designers at the present day, the more facile is their manufacture.

This abandonment of beaten iron as a material for the treatment of the designer is much to be regretted; its



strength and elastic character fitting it so well for tracery and foliage, and qualifying it for taking an expression at the hand of the artist which no other material can supply.



Bell-pull and Escutcheons for Keys or Latches. Nuremberg Iron.  
Soc. of Arts, Edinburgh.

The stroke of the hammer has infinitely more expression than any cast from a mould, even were the molten metal much more ductile and better fitted for sharp castings than we ever find it. In the museum now building in Oxford, under the supervision of Mr. Woodward, iron is again employed in its ancient and legitimate functions. The molten column supports the main weight, but the spandrels of the roof are beautifully filled from Mr. Skidmore's designs by hammered work imitating natural foliage, horse-chestnut, oak, plane, giving the character of the forest trees broadly yet lightly, as no other material could do. This feature in the architecture of the museum has had some influence on the arts, as beaten iron-work of excellent

character has appeared already in household appliances, as well as on a larger scale in connection with public fountains and other works.

But, independently of the truly artistic use of iron, the hammering of it into design, our cast-iron work is curiously bad. From one end of the country to the other the same straight rods of iron, brittle although thick, sharpened at the top, are all we have in the place of a fence. 'Incalculable is the amount of mischief done to our taste in England by that fence iron-work of ours alone. . . . Your iron railing means always thieves outside, or Bedlam within;—it *can* mean nothing else than that,' says our most elocutionary writer on art; but the fact is, it means nothing; it is the result of want of meaning, want of thought. Beauty of form, design of any kind, is not felt to be requisite; a sad enough admission, in a manufacture so extensive. Now, however, within a few years, we observe the everlasting spike railing disappearing before more florid attempts at art.

## LECTURE IX.

## WORKING IN GOLD AND SILVER.

THE fraternities of painters in Italy began to enrol themselves in Siena and elsewhere as early as the twelfth century. The artist, as distinguished from the skilled workman or artisan, claimed no privilege of rank for many generations afterwards. Not, indeed, till intellectual distinctions had separated men, and elevated some in various walks from common employments and waste of their time, did social consideration follow, and that only in the age immediately preceding the highest development of Italian art. These fraternities or guilds consequently embraced many trades as well as the painters of pictures, who were then exclusively makers of altar-pieces and decorators; armourers and locksmiths, heraldry painters on banners and tabards, were also associated in the same brotherhood. In Florence the painters enrolled themselves as a branch of the society of physicians and apothecaries.

But of all the different specialties associated with art, the working in gold and silver has, nearly in all ages, taken the highest place. The mysteries of enamelling, and of modelling, casting, carving, chasing, graving, niello-working, seal cutting, and the setting of precious stones, were all branches of his profession, and combined in the goldsmith's workshop. The circle of his knowledge was wider than that of the

exclusive painter or sculptor, as he required all the science of the day in refining and treating his metals. Thus we find his guild the richest and most important of all the corporations in the cities furthest advanced in the arts of luxury; and we are not surprised to learn that some of the greatest architects, sculptors, and painters, were educated as goldsmiths. Printing from engraving, one of the most important of the fine arts, originated by accident in one of his processes. The goldsmith of later times has shrunk into much narrower dimensions; but still the artistic talent he commands in designing, modelling in wax, and chasing, is of a more educated description than that employed in any other branch of industry, and is perhaps more highly remunerated.

Among the ancients the precious metals were very largely employed, and personal ornaments of all descriptions were in immense request. These abound in museums, although the value of the material is fatal to sculpture in gold or silver, and to the preservation of all objects in which they are employed; so much so that the specimens of goldsmiths' work of classic times are only those that have been preserved by accident.

The same, indeed, may be said of the early works of our own country, and of the middle ages of Europe. Scarcely can even the insignia of royalty be preserved from one dynasty to another, and the vessels of the church, although accounted sacred by the priests, sooner or later are carried to the melting-pot. Nevertheless the productions of the jeweller's skill still preserved on the Continent are sufficient to illustrate the history of his art from the earliest times; and the antiquity and universality of the love of jewellery are sufficiently proved by the number of bracelets for the arms; fibulæ, or buckles for the shoulder or chest; torques, or necklaces to clasp the throat, an ornament worn by men; rings;



ouches, and many other disused personal adornments; found in the soil, or in graves, in this and in every other country. They also show that gold has existed in larger or smaller quantities nearly everywhere in Europe, and that it has been used as early as any metal: perhaps earlier than any other, as it presents itself in all its purity in the beds of streams, or merely in mechanical combination with quartz and earth. In this country, in Scandinavia, and elsewhere quite out of the influence of Asiatic example, gold was used as the medium of exchange in various shapes. A few years ago a number of the gold rings, or small trumpet-like shapes, used as money by the Britons were turned up in Northumberland, hooked together like a chain. Chinese coins are perforated in the centre, and kept together on a wire or stick; these British ring coins seemed to be carried and preserved by being hooked together; the gold being unalloyed, and consequently very ductile, they could be detached by bending.

Some of our old examples of goldsmiths' work are enamelled, and have been already mentioned. A few others, such as the pectoral cross, maniple, and other remains, found with the bones of St. Cuthbert on the opening of his grave at Durham, in 1827, do not present much claim on our attention. Indeed, the remaining examples of the art in England of much later times are too few to illustrate any history, however briefly. Even in the Tower, or at Windsor, there is little or no native workmanship. Time after time the crowns and sceptres were pledged by our kings in their necessities; and Henry VIII. went a step further, and used up such as could be spared for coinage. On the establishment of the Commonwealth, such as remained were entirely swept away; the coronation of Charles II. having afterwards to be delayed for want of the necessary appliances to the ceremonial. To preserve the Scottish regalia, again,

which, however, are not ancient, they were hidden for many years; first by a clergyman in the floor of his church, and subsequently in a strong box in the Castle of Edinburgh. Neither is the church and corporation plate still existing of much consequence. Few, indeed, go further back than the end of the fourteenth century. The most noticeable—nearly all later than that date—are the cups, salts, and a few other things, belonging to the colleges in Oxford, left to them by their founders.

We must, therefore, take a general view of the working in precious metals on the continent of Europe, instead of confining our attention to home; first mentioning, a little more particularly, the peculiar ornament of the Saxon times, the fibula, or shoulder clasp, so frequently found.

The large loose mantle, very much resembling the upper garment of Roman civilians, seems to have been indispensable to both Saxon and Celt. Turning over the plates in Strutt's '*Dresses and Habits of the People of England*,' it appears to have been generally worn except by the workman at his work. This ample drapery was clasped generally on the left shoulder, and the number of buckles found for this purpose throughout the country proves their use to have been universal. Some of these, Irish and Scotch, have been imitated of late, so as to make their forms popularly known. The Saxons carried the fashion to an extreme; the shape was very fantastic, and the size very large; one found in Yorkshire, now in the possession of Sir W. Lawson, being nearly seven inches in length. These were, however, made of various metals, this large one being bronze; but under the title of goldsmiths' work must be included all the artistic uses of metals for ornaments of small size. The same processes and the same skill were necessary towards the production of the jewelled

chalice, the 'parcel-gilt' copper goblet, or even the pewters of later times.

The guilds of goldsmiths are more ancient than any others, I believe. In the eleventh century, in France and in this country, they were already divided into four classes—the buckle makers, the moneyers, the makers and mounters of cups, and the workers in gold. Their art and mystery had been preserved from the times of the Empire. Before Constantine removed the capital seat to Byzantium, he presented the Roman churches with many magnificent gifts for the altar, thereby commencing that system which so materially added to the importance of the mediæval church, and which makes it necessary to refer to it for illustrations in recounting the story of any of the decorative arts. These gifts comprehended crosses of gold weighing 300 lb., patens of gold of large dimensions, chalices of gold and silver, cruets for the wine, lamps and lustres of different forms enriched with figures of animals, baptismal fonts, altar frontals, censers, and even statues, it is said, of gold and silver.

But it was in the new capital that the arts most flourished, especially those more purely ministering to luxury, as the goldsmith's for the most part must be considered as doing. Sumptuousness in this department rose to a high pitch; Chrysostom, preaching against pride and vanity, says all the admiration of his day was reserved for the goldsmith and the weaver. About the same date we find in France some evidence of this luxury, in church plate at least, having penetrated to the West. But the earliest modern specimens remaining are Lombard, now or lately in the Cathedral of Monza, the most interesting of which \* is the so-called Iron

\* The Emperor of Austria carried away the iron crown at the beginning of the war in 1859. In the Austro-Italian treaty of peace



Crown of Lombardy, a jointed circlet or collar of gold, about three inches wide, loaded with sapphires, emeralds, rubies, and other precious stones in an uncut condition. The iron which gives it its name is a narrow rim of that metal incrustated in the interior, traditionally related to have been forged out of one of the nails of the cross.

The chair or throne of King Dagobert, now to be seen in the Museum of the Louvre, is not very much later than the Iron Crown of Lombardy. It is a bronze seat, engraved and gilded, supposed to be the work of St. Eloy, treasurer and mint-master to Dagobert till 640, when he was made a bishop. This saint, like our Dunstan, was an adept in metals, and assembled monks skilled in all the arts in a monastery he founded near Limoges. Whether actually his or not, this kingly chair is an interesting monument of that early time—two centuries before Charlemagne—if indeed it be not for the most part Roman, MM. Martin and Cahier, in their '*Mélanges Archæologiques*,' having nearly proved it to be a curule chair, with the back and arms added: these being, in that case, the only portions that could have been the handiwork of the saint.

This brotherhood of monks 'skilled in all the arts' retained their excellence for many generations, and were brought into play by Charlemagne, whose will shows he possessed immense riches in gold-work. A number of the most superb specimens followed him into the tomb; his embalmed body, wrapped in imperial robes, having been planted on a throne of gold; his sword, with embroidered scabbard and pommel, placed at his side; his head decorated by a chain of gold, and before him his golden shield and sceptre hung against the wall.

just concluded (Oct. 8, 1866), all archives and works of art are to be returned to Italy; the iron crown being particularly specified.



In this royal state, the corpse sat in its sepulchral chamber under the dome of the church of Aix-la-Chapelle. But even the tomb of the greatest king of those centuries was not a sanctuary wherein gold and silver were safe ; it was rifled, possibly by Frederick Barbarossa, who caused Charlemagne to be canonised, and nothing of that great man is now extant except the crown and sword, still forming part of the regalia in Vienna. Labarte, in mentioning the destruction of other notable works in gold of early French art, vindicates the Reformation and the Revolution from the imputation so often cast upon them, particularly on the former, of causing the destruction of monuments of art ; showing that such desecration was also wantonly and feloniously resorted to both by kings and priests when no principle was at stake. Thus the shrine of St. Germain des Prés, fabricated in 888, was consigned to the crucible by Abbot William in 1408 ; as that of Ste. G  nevi  ve, designed by St. Eloy himself, had been in the reign of St. Louis ; and as the great silver grating of admirable workmanship, the delight of the votaries of St. Martin, was afterwards by Francis I.

Yet churches have been the best treasuries of early works of the description we are considering : shrines and altars are not wanting, as well as chalices and other plate, illustrative of the Byzantine and Gothic taste in the early and middle ages. One of these, now preserved in the H  tel de Cluny, in Paris, one of the most delightful museums in the world to the student of art, has been much quoted. It is the golden front of the altar of the Cathedral of Basle, of the time of the Emperor Henry II., 1020. Not melted, but sold by auction, it has survived and been added to that great collection. It is nearly six feet in width, and represents Christ in the centre, with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel on one hand, and Raphael and St. Benedict on the

other. They stand under the arches of a Romanesque arcade, supported by columns, the shafts of which are divided midway by round fillets, their capitals being of the form called scaphoid or cushion-shaped, and the spandrels are filled by small medallions and a beautiful diaper in relief. At the feet of Christ are two very small figures: these represent Henry and his Empress; and their smallness illustrates a principle in the practice of those times carried down even to the culmination of Italian art, viz. that of expressing the greatness of the character by the comparative largeness of the figure. Thus, by the side of our Lord, a king is but a pigmy; but when seated in the midst of his assembly, he becomes large in proportion.

The monk Theophilus, the best authority we have for the processes of the early ages, devotes no less than seventy-nine of his short chapters to the goldsmith, showing us how much was required of him then. He was to grave with burins and scalpels; to execute bas-reliefs and figures in *repoussé*, that is, hammering the design from the back of the metal plate—a favourite and beautiful method in able hands. Of course he was to model in wax and other materials; to be informed in all metallic mixtures, and in the preparation of *nigellum* for niello-work. After describing the tools, Theophilus enters on the technical part of the art; but it is not necessary to follow him. The best period of Gothic architecture was certainly not eminent in the production of the smaller works of elegance so necessary to the enjoyment of civilised life. The furniture was heavy and rude, smoothed only by the adze; and wills or inventories show us how rare, and consequently how prized, were the household articles exhibiting the hand of the skilled artist. On the contrary, the Renaissance spirit, while disporting itself over vast canvases with life-sized

figures, and intruding into the most sacred subjects its classical licence, or raising masses of Corinthian porches with pedimented windows, must be considered soulless and vapid to the last degree, but is truly beautiful when applied to decoration in which no lofty purpose is implied. The motives and forms of construction and ornamentation characteristic of the sixteenth century are more elegant than those of any other in modern history. The revival of the three great arts—gradual in Italy, more sudden and revolutionary in France and England, slow and late in Germany—could not fail to modify the style of design of every minor art very much for the better. Indeed, the best productions of the goldsmith north of the Alps were previously imitations of architecture; the shrines were small models of churches; and even the crosiers, such as that of William of Wykeham, the great architect, now preserved in New College, Oxford, is only a model in small of an enriched tower or spire, spoiled by the necessity of making it terminate in a crook. The most exclusive admirer of the Pointed or 'Christian' style of architecture, as some love to designate the church building of the three latest centuries of the dark ages, must limit his admiration to the architect and his assistants, the glass painter, and the sculptor in stone.

At the end of the thirteenth century, when Nicola and Giovanni of Pisa in sculpture, and Giotto in painting, had cast off the Byzantine yoke, the goldsmiths immediately adopted the new beauties, metal sculpture made progress, and we suddenly find the goldsmith in the highest regions of art. The school of Pisa was the first to distinguish itself, Nicola and Giovanni having many pupils in this walk, particularly the brothers Agostino and Agnolo, and Andrew of Pisa (1345). The two greatest monuments of



the time are the altars of St. James of Pistoia and of the Baptistery of St. John, in Florence, where Ghiberti afterwards worked. For more than 150 years the most skilful goldsmiths were engaged, though irregularly, on these two works. Many men of noble artistic powers were occupied on other similar labours; and among them Brunelleschi is known to have modelled two prophets in silver for Pistoia, before he resigned metal-work, and became first the rival of Donatello, himself originally a goldsmith, in sculpture, and afterwards his superior in architecture, completing a long career by raising the great cupola of the Cathedral of Florence. A little later, in 1446, Luca della Robbia emerged from the atelier of the goldsmith Leonardo; but of him we may speak afterwards in another walk. Before this date Lorenzo Ghiberti, then twenty years of age, had left the workshop of his father-in-law, and was on his way to Rimini to seek work, when, recalled by the proclamation of the guild of merchants, he offered himself a candidate for the execution of the great doors of the Baptistery, only one of the three great doors having been already done by Andrew of Pisa.

This competition was one of the most notable that have ever taken place, as it was, no doubt, one of the earliest. Among the competitors were Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Jacopo della Quercia, who generously acknowledged themselves vanquished by the panel and design sent in by Ghiberti. The judges ratified this decision, and Ghiberti took the place, which perhaps he will ever hold, of the greatest bas-relief sculptor in metal that the world has seen. The competition productions of Brunelleschi and Ghiberti may still be inspected in the cabinet of bronzes of the Florentine Gallery. Labarte says Ghiberti owed his victory to the exquisite and finished execution of his bronze,



which had been completed and retouched with the greatest care, 'and it may be safely asserted that it was to his talent as a goldsmith that he owed his triumph in this encounter with the greatest sculptors of the fifteenth century.' Nor did he ever relinquish his practice in that department in which he had been reared, but executed many artistic jewels, and left a memoir of himself and of the goldsmith's art, the earliest attempt at a history of art in Italy.

While these, and others yet to be named, left their early practice for different and more extensive spheres, as a pure goldsmith the highest place seems to belong to Pollainuolo, who executed the latest portion of the Baptistry high altar after Ghiberti had completed the gates. This monument I cannot describe from my own inspection, as it is only exhibited on the feast of St. John, and is jealously kept in the cathedral, where it can only be seen through interest, and on no account is allowed to be sketched.\* It is ten and a half feet in length, having in the centre a statue of the Baptist, and on each side of him four bas-reliefs from his history, in two tiers, one of which is by Ghiberti, another by Verocchio, the sculptor of the bronze of Colleoni in Venice, I suppose the finest equestrian statue in the world.

The mention of this last artist's name introduces us to others who forsook the goldsmiths' guild for the painters', and left behind them equal renown. Francia, born in 1450, became celebrated for his medals and the dies he cut for the coinage of the state, nor had he even touched a pencil till some time after he attained to manhood. 'It was therefore,' says Labarte, 'by a sort of miracle, for which there

\* Since this paper was written, Mr. Waring's work, 'Examples of Italian Art,' has appeared, containing an engraving of the altar, which he accomplished by sketching small portions at a time during a number of short visits.

had been no precedent, that the labour of a few years sufficed to place him among the first masters of his time.' Domenico, again, followed the occupation of his father Tommaso, a goldsmith who received the surname of Ghirlandajo from an ornament of silver in form of a garland which he invented, and of which the Florentine girls were passionately fond. These, and the silver chapel-lamp he made with great applause, as well as other delightful things, have disappeared: he is now only remembered as the father of the painter, who inherited the name of Ghirlandajo.

Under the rule of Lorenzo and Julian de' Medici, one of the most esteemed goldsmiths of Florence was Michelagnolo, of whose work Vasari mentions with great praise the decorated armour worn by Julian at a grand fête in the Piazza Santa Croce. This artist had as apprentice, at an early age, Benvenuto Cellini, a man who has left so singular a character behind him that critics are divided regarding him and his genius, although many excellent works still exist by him. He was a man fitted for a soldier-adventurer in the free companies then at the command of princes at war. While yet a boy he was banished to Siena, and at nineteen he was in Rome, living how he might, studying the antique. In his autobiography, one of the most amusing books of that kind, he relates all his exploits and successes among goldsmiths and artists; his duels, and his interviews with sorcerers, grand dukes, and others; and asserts that he it was who killed the Constable Bourbon, as that leader mounted a ladder at the siege of Rome; and that he commanded the artillery in the Castle of St. Angelo in which the Pope was besieged, at the same time that he melted down, by Clement's directions, all the tiaras, sacred vessels, and jewels, after unsetting the stones, producing for the Pope in his dire extremity, by this sweeping destruction of relics of his own

art, nearly two hundredweight of gold. 'This man,' says M. Dussieux, 'did some good works, but he had so much audacity, such incomparable impudence, that it is more by their means than by his talents that he acquired his colossal reputation. He has become a myth.' But no one who has seen his bust of Cosmo I. and his Perseus, both in Florence, can assent to this severe judgment. He may make too much of the difficulties he encountered; but that we must pardon in consideration of his admirable story-telling, his autobiography being so delightful a book and conveying so vivid a picture of his times. His other literary production, his treatise on the goldsmith's art, we may describe a little, since it throws considerable light on the requirements of the artists. Chapter I. treats of the nature of precious stones and of the foils to be used with them. Chapter II. of niello and the processes employed in its use. Chapter III. relates to filigree-work, a method of producing fine open design in silver. Chapter IV. is on enamelling. Chapter V. gold-work, embossing and chasing the plates of metal, forming out of them the ornaments and statuettes to be employed in the composition of jewellery. Minute chiselling seems to have been his delight; nothing, he says, is to be cast or stamped. The jewel most in fashion at this time was a medallion or pendant, called by the French *enseigne*, worn in the hat or hair, such as we invariably see in the contemporary portraits. Chapter VI. describes the art of engraving in intaglio, both on metals and stones for seals. The next four chapters are occupied with coins and medals: XI. and XII. relate to melting and casting, and the processes employed in constructing vases; and XIII. to the working of statues the size of life and even of colossal proportions. The remainder of the book is occupied more exclusively with technical matters.



The names of illustrious goldsmiths during the following century are numerous; but it is of little use now to distinguish men whose productions are nowhere to be seen, or are entirely uncertain. On those of France Cellini pronounces an eulogium, which proves that at the time he visited Paris, 1540, they had entirely abandoned Gothic design, and that the classic tendency of the Renaissance was as fully established there as in Italy. Perhaps the most skilful man in ornament in Paris living about this time was François Briot, an artist of whom little is known, and whose productions are only in pewter.

The principal article of furniture of the dining-room of the citizen as well as of the prince was the *dressoir*, or side-board, on which all the plate was placed for show. The cost of the precious metals preventing this display in any but the homes of princes, Briot and others set themselves to provide a cheaper splendour by fabricating artistically in pewter. The material was easily worked, the danger of destruction less; and those by Briot obtained as much admiration as similar works in more precious materials, exhibiting, as they did, elegant designs, chaste form in figures, and capricious bas-reliefs. They are considered by French collectors the most excellent specimens of the workmanship of the sixteenth century.

The subsequent history of design in metals down to our own time may be shortly disposed of. In the early half of the seventeenth century French taste took the place of Italian throughout Europe in the lighter matters of decoration; and at the end of that age, Watteau in painting, and Louis Quatorze, or rather his upholsterers, in decoration, were considered to have made art fit for ladies and gentlemen perfect in the politeness of the court. The quasi-learned character of the Renaissance degenerated into an



enervated and mechanical prettiness. The gold and silver plate of Louis XIV. was ostentatious in size and weight: Lebrun was employed to design it, and Balin to execute. The king had seven or eight masters in the art living in the Louvre and working there. Their works have been much praised, but are all gone. In the war at the end of the century, every kind of expedient was resorted to to raise funds; the nobility were ordered to bring all their heavy plant to the mint, and Louis showed them the example by throwing into the melting-pot all the tables and seats of massive silver, candelabra, statues, bas-reliefs, the work of Lebrun, Balin, and others. They had cost twelve millions of francs, and were coined into three millions.

From this time there is little new to remark. No amount of mere ingenuity, no labour, nor weight of precious metal, can make a commonplace luxury into a work of art, nor give it the same importance that belongs to a historical monument however rude; and such are the only characteristics that distinguish the more remarkable modern works. The father of Frederick the Great put his extra revenue into the shape of solid chandeliers and other furniture, with a clear intention of converting them, as need might be, into coin again. The last King of Poland, his contemporary, had a representation of the Indian court of Aurungzebe, made by Dinglinger, a multitudinous array of silver statuettes, costing 58,484 crowns. In the same spirit, but in better taste perhaps, was the plateau 30 feet in length by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  wide, presented to the Duke of Wellington by the Prince Regent of Portugal, decorated with emblematic figures in the centre and round the margin, holding wreaths and candelabra, which covered the dining table at the annual banquet at Apsley House, according to Mr. Salter's picture, and which is said to be worth 10,000*l*.

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Like every other ornamentist, the silversmith now endeavours to reproduce the forms and decorations of former styles, nor is it easy to see how this imitative state of things is to be remedied, except by an intelligent appeal to nature. The historic subjects now chosen in place of cups at our races and on other public occasions afford improved opportunities for figure design, were they not treated in so florid a manner; in finish and delicacy of modelling they are perfect.

## LECTURE X.

## THE ART OF ENGRAVING ON WOOD AND COPPER.

ENGRAVING with steel tools on metal plates for merely ornamental effects, or carving on smooth surfaces, either of stone or wood, is not the subject we have to treat of. Such practice has been common to all countries and ages; and there is no doubt that dies were used by the Romans for stamping. Tickets to the theatres and tradesmen's names were so stamped, many such being still preserved; exhibiting, for example, the outline of a shoe, with the name of the shoemaker within it, to be stamped, no doubt, on the article when sold. But this ornamentation by means of engraving, and this rudimentary printing, or stamping, went no further and led to no result; and it is not necessary, in any enquiry into the history of engraving, as one of the fine arts most important in our modern civilisation, to go much further back than the time when the block-books spoken of in my former paper were enjoying a short popularity of cheapness, preparatory to the invention of Gutenberg, on the one hand, and to Martin Schön and his unknown master on the other.

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two, is practised by drawing on the box-wood block and then cutting out all the surface, leaving only the lines of the pencil standing, the impression being then taken off by surface printing. A wood engraving is, in fact, a stamp; and in the block presents scarcely any intelligible aspect to the uninitiated eye. Copper or steel engraving, on the contrary, consists in incising the design on the smooth polished surface, the printing ink being rubbed into the incisions and printed by pressure on paper prepared to receive it. In this process the artist copies from the original picture with his etching-point or burin on the metal surface, in the same way he would copy it with a pencil on paper; while the wood engraver can make little use of a picture set before him; he must have the design drawn on the wood to begin with, and all his attention is devoted to carefully leaving it, and carrying away all the unnecessary surface.

Whether the custom of stamping pictures and pages of books is entirely a native German invention, or a practice suggested and derived from the East through the Venetians, it is apparently impossible now to determine. The Chinese having no alphabet, but a different character for every word, the printing of books by composing with types as we do, who use only twenty-four letters, was impossible to them, their characters being 30,000. Thus the Chinese books are stamped from page blocks, the entire book being cut in as many blocks as there are pages—just the method used in the block-books.

Similar inventions, however, rise up in various parts of the world; and there is little chance of our tracing the invention of wood engraving to the East, although we do not know when it began in Europe.

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Christopher crossing the stream with the Holy Child on his shoulder, dated 1423, and a companion print of the Annunciation, were, for a number of years, considered the earliest extant. An older has lately been found in Brussels, and others may yet be discovered pasted into the boards of books or used by the trunkmaker.\* The subject of the Brussels print is one quite characteristic of the middle ages, being the Virgin Mary sitting amidst a number of female saints within a palisadoed enclosure, which was called 'the Garden of Mary,' and is dated 1418; † it was found on the inside of a coffer or trunk turned out with other old properties from the archives of Malines, and sold to M. Reffémberg for 500 francs. A decree of the senate of Venice of 1441 is still extant, protecting the art and mystery of making 'cards and printed figures and coloured figures printed,' as practised by citizens, from the discouragement of importation; showing that printed pictures must have existed for some time elsewhere as well as in Venice. The preparation of playing-cards, indeed, seems to have been the earliest application of wood engraving, although it is difficult to determine between those printed and those stencilled. The date of this edict is exactly contemporaneous with the beginnings of Fust and Gutenberg at Mentz, whose great discovery was of course not the printing of books, but the invention of moveable types and

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the time are the altars of St. James of Pistoia and of the Baptistery of St. John, in Florence, where Ghiberti afterwards worked. For more than 150 years the most skilful goldsmiths were engaged, though irregularly, on these two works. Many men of noble artistic powers were occupied on other similar labours; and among them Brunelleschi is known to have modelled two prophets in silver for Pistoia, before he resigned metal-work, and became first the rival of Donatello, himself originally a goldsmith, in sculpture, and afterwards his superior in architecture, completing a long career by raising the great cupola of the Cathedral of Florence. A little later, in 1446, Luca della Robbia emerged from the atelier of the goldsmith Leonardo; but of him we may speak afterwards in another walk. Before this date Lorenzo Ghiberti, then twenty years of age, had left the workshop of his father-in-law, and was on his way to Rimini to seek work, when, recalled by the proclamation of the guild of merchants, he offered himself a candidate for the execution of the great doors of the Baptistery, only one of the three great doors having been already done by Andrew of Pisa.

This competition was one of the most notable that have ever taken place, as it was, no doubt, one of the earliest. Among the competitors were Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Jacopo della Quercia, who generously acknowledged themselves vanquished by the panel and design sent in by Ghiberti. The judges ratified this decision, and Ghiberti took the place, which perhaps he will ever hold, of the greatest bas-relief sculptor in metal that the world has seen. The competition productions of Brunelleschi and Ghiberti may still be inspected in the cabinet of bronzes of the Florentine Gallery. Labarte says Ghiberti owed his victory to the exquisite and finished execution of his bronze,

which had been completed and retouched with the greatest care, 'and it may be safely asserted that it was to his talent as a goldsmith that he owed his triumph in this encounter with the greatest sculptors of the fifteenth century.' Nor did he ever relinquish his practice in that department in which he had been reared, but executed many artistic jewels, and left a memoir of himself and of the goldsmith's art, the earliest attempt at a history of art in Italy.

While these, and others yet to be named, left their early practice for different and more extensive spheres, as a pure goldsmith the highest place seems to belong to Pollaiuolo, who executed the latest portion of the Baptistery high altar after Ghiberti had completed the gates. This monument I cannot describe from my own inspection, as it is only exhibited on the feast of St. John, and is jealously kept in the cathedral, where it can only be seen through interest, and on no account is allowed to be sketched.\* It is ten and a half feet in length, having in the centre a statue of the Baptist, and on each side of him four bas-reliefs from his history, in two tiers, one of which is by Ghiberti, another by Verocchio, the sculptor of the bronze of Colleoni in Venice, I suppose the finest equestrian statue in the world.

The mention of this last artist's name introduces us to others who forsook the goldsmiths' guild for the painters', and left behind them equal renown. Francia, born in 1450, became celebrated for his medals and the dies he cut for the coinage of the state, nor had he even touched a pencil till some time after he attained to manhood. 'It was therefore,' says Labarte, 'by a sort of miracle, for which there

\* Since this paper was written, Mr. Waring's work, 'Examples of Italian Art,' has appeared, containing an engraving of the altar, which he accomplished by sketching small portions at a time during a number of short visits.



had been no precedent, that the labour of a few years sufficed to place him among the first masters of his time.' Domenico, again, followed the occupation of his father Tommaso, a goldsmith who received the surname of Ghirlandajo from an ornament of silver in form of a garland which he invented, and of which the Florentine girls were passionately fond. These, and the silver chapel-lamp he made with great applause, as well as other delightful things, have disappeared: he is now only remembered as the father of the painter, who inherited the name of Ghirlandajo.

Under the rule of Lorenzo and Julian de' Medici, one of the most esteemed goldsmiths of Florence was Michelagnolo, of whose work Vasari mentions with great praise the decorated armour worn by Julian at a grand fête in the Piazza Santa Croce. This artist had as apprentice, at an early age, Benvenuto Cellini, a man who has left so singular a character behind him that critics are divided regarding him and his genius, although many excellent works still exist by him. He was a man fitted for a soldier-adventurer in the free companies then at the command of princes at war. While yet a boy he was banished to Siena, and at nineteen he was in Rome, living how he might, studying the antique. In his autobiography, one of the most amusing books of that kind, he relates all his exploits and successes among goldsmiths and artists; his duels, and his interviews with sorcerers, grand dukes, and others; and asserts that he it was who killed the Constable Bourbon, as that leader mounted a ladder at the siege of Rome; and that he commanded the artillery in the Castle of St. Angelo in which the Pope was besieged, at the same time that he melted down, by Clement's directions, all the tiaras, sacred vessels, and jewels, after unsetting the stones, producing for the Pope in his dire extremity, by this sweeping destruction of relics of his own



art, nearly two hundredweight of gold. 'This man,' says M. Dussieux, 'did some good works, but he had so much audacity, such incomparable impudence, that it is more by their means than by his talents that he acquired his colossal reputation. He has become a myth.' But no one who has seen his bust of Cosmo I. and his Perseus, both in Florence, can assent to this severe judgment. He may make too much of the difficulties he encountered; but that we must pardon in consideration of his admirable story-telling, his autobiography being so delightful a book and conveying so vivid a picture of his times. His other literary production, his treatise on the goldsmith's art, we may describe a little, since it throws considerable light on the requirements of the artists. Chapter I. treats of the nature of precious stones and of the foils to be used with them. Chapter II. of niello and the processes employed in its use. Chapter III. relates to filigree-work, a method of producing fine open design in silver. Chapter IV. is on enamelling. Chapter V. gold-work, embossing and chasing the plates of metal, forming out of them the ornaments and statuettes to be employed in the composition of jewellery. Minute chiselling seems to have been his delight; nothing, he says, is to be cast or stamped. The jewel most in fashion at this time was a medallion or pendant, called by the French *enseigne*, worn in the hat or hair, such as we invariably see in the contemporary portraits. Chapter VI. describes the art of engraving in intaglio, both on metals and stones for seals. The next four chapters are occupied with coins and medals: XI. and XII. relate to melting and casting, and the processes employed in constructing vases; and XIII. to the working of statues the size of life and even of colossal proportions. The remainder of the book is occupied more exclusively with technical matters.

The names of illustrious goldsmiths during the following century are numerous; but it is of little use now to distinguish men whose productions are nowhere to be seen, or are entirely uncertain. On those of France Cellini pronounces an eulogium, which proves that at the time he visited Paris, 1540, they had entirely abandoned Gothic design, and that the classic tendency of the Renaissance was as fully established there as in Italy. Perhaps the most skilful man in ornament in Paris living about this time was François Briot, an artist of whom little is known, and whose productions are only in pewter.

The principal article of furniture of the dining-room of the citizen as well as of the prince was the *dressoir*, or side-board, on which all the plate was placed for show. The cost of the precious metals preventing this display in any but the homes of princes, Briot and others set themselves to provide a cheaper splendour by fabricating artistically in pewter. The material was easily worked, the danger of destruction less; and those by Briot obtained as much admiration as similar works in more precious materials, exhibiting, as they did, elegant designs, chaste form in figures, and capricious *bas-reliefs*. They are considered by French collectors the most excellent specimens of the workmanship of the sixteenth century.

The subsequent history of design in metals down to our own time may be shortly disposed of. In the early half of the seventeenth century French taste took the place of Italian throughout Europe in the lighter matters of decoration; and at the end of that age, Watteau in painting, and Louis Quatorze, or rather his upholsterers, in decoration, were considered to have made art fit for ladies and gentlemen perfect in the politeness of the court. The quasi-learned character of the Renaissance degenerated into an

enervated and mechanical prettiness. The gold and silver plate of Louis XIV. was ostentatious in size and weight: Lebrun was employed to design it, and Balin to execute. The king had seven or eight masters in the art living in the Louvre and working there. Their works have been much praised, but are all gone. In the war at the end of the century, every kind of expedient was resorted to to raise funds; the nobility were ordered to bring all their heavy plant to the mint, and Louis showed them the example by throwing into the melting-pot all the tables and seats of massive silver, candelabra, statues, bas-reliefs, the work of Lebrun, Balin, and others. They had cost twelve millions of francs, and were coined into three millions.

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two, is practised by drawing on the box-wood block and then cutting out all the surface, leaving only the lines of the pencil standing, the impression being then taken off by surface printing. A wood engraving is, in fact, a stamp; and in the block presents scarcely any intelligible aspect to the uninitiated eye. Copper or steel engraving, on the contrary, consists in incising the design on the smooth polished surface, the printing ink being rubbed into the incisions and printed by pressure on paper prepared to receive it. In this process the artist copies from the original picture with his etching-point or burin on the metal surface, in the same way he would copy it with a pencil on paper; while the wood engraver can make little use of a picture set before him; he must have the design drawn on the wood to begin with, and all his attention is devoted to carefully leaving it, and carrying away all the unnecessary surface.

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the press. Books of a few pages, pictures rudely coloured by hand, as well as cards, were stamped or stencilled for the people, while the miniatori were elaborating the vellum pages for the prince and the wealthy burgher. Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, had a pack illuminated by the best art of the day on gilded grounds at a cost of 1500 crowns of gold.

The invention of stamping pictures from wood engravings had no remarkable immediate effect. The process of



Michel Wohlgemuth, Dürer's Master.

cutting away all the wood, and leaving only the delicate lines of the design drawn by the artist, was too elaborate to be brought to perfection at once. But in little more than half a century, in connection with the press and simultaneously in Venice, Nürnberg, and Saxony, the art appears in its highest artistic development. In Venice many books appeared; but the best of all is one of the earliest, the '*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*,' a story in the



similitude of a dream, illustrated by many beautiful designs by an unknown artist, was published in 1498. These have been attributed to Bellini, to Mantegna, and to other artists, but without sufficient grounds. More probably they were by the German artist Jacob Walsch, called the master of the Caduceus by his having employed that mark on his copper engravings, as we know he was at that time working in Venice, and wood engraving was a German invention.

North of the Alps, wood engraving was still more important, and in the young hands of Albert Dürer, Lucas Cranach, Hans Burgmair, and others, it spread abroad the noblest native art among the German people, from the grand town of Nürnberg and other centres, then being emancipated by the Reformation. Ulm, Augsburg, and Nürnberg, were at this time great seats of commerce and of wealth, and consequently in advance of general civilisation on this side of the Alps. Here the arts, both useful and elegant, were best understood and most prosperous; and we find the painters who first turned their attention to wood engraving were of this school. Wohlgemuth is recognised as the artist of the cuts in the Nürnberg Chronicle. His pupil, Albert Dürer, one of the greatest names in the calendar, began immediately on his commencing the practice of art to give much attention to drawing on wood, publishing his sixteen large designs from the Apocalypse, in the same year as that in which the 'Hypnerotomachia' appeared, 1498. Dear to the citizens of Nürnberg is the name of Dürer; they believe him to have been 'an universal genius,' painter, engraver, goldsmith, carver, and to have constructed the great round towers that still so strikingly guard the city walls. His statue in bronze stands at the head of the Dürer Platz; his house is national property, to be preserved for ever; and his grave at St. John's Gotte-

sacker, is singularly interesting. But whether he raised the towers or not, it is certain he did not engrave on the wood, but only drew the design on the block. The same is to be said of all the artists, early or late, except Bewick, who appear as illustrators of books or histories by means of wood. The process is essentially opposed to the practice of the draughtsman, painter, etcher, or copper engraver, who all describe with a pointed instrument, brush, pencil, or burin, the form to be expressed. No doubt many hands



Albert Dürer. Medal struck at the Jubilee, 1828.

cut the blocks that Dürer drew, and in the interminable series of large pictures called the 'Triumphs of Maximilian,' drawn by Hans Burgmair for that emperor, many of the engravers have put their initials on the blocks. The life of Dürer was full of other work ; he travelled into Italy, but retained the stern and gaunt German manner, exchanged sketches with Raphael, and gave, perhaps, as much honour as he took by the exchange, although his life was but an obscure one compared with that of the favourite of fortune as well as genius. The German artists generally, or at least very many of them, designed for wood engraving ; and

amongst the most remarkable of their sets of prints are two by Hans Holbein, his small illustrations of the Bible and his 'Dance of Death;' the latter subject being one of the most favourite satirical moralities all over Europe for many years. The embodiment of the king of terrors as a skeleton entering into every house from the hut to the palace dancing and making merry over his victims, was a witticism with a menace and warning, that gave immense satisfaction. Some *Danses Macabres*, a name not quite well explained, are found on stone in the Gothic string courses; others were painted in fresco, one such having decorated old St. Paul's in the time of Henry VI. In the Neustadt Kirchhof, a churchyard in the environs of Dresden, is a large 'Dance of Death' in twenty-seven figures treated very like the groups by Holbein, and executed just before his publication appeared (1534). Thus the subject was one generally understood: and for character, truth, and vividness, the series by Holbein conveys the highest idea of him as an artist. It appeared in 1538, and was published in Lyons.

The German school of Dürer, and those of others, his contemporaries and successors, declined; and wood engraving, which must ever depend not more on the execution of the cutting than on the artist who makes the design, fell with other dependent forms of art-industry. In Italy it rather advanced; but only as decorating the beginnings and endings of books or chapters of books. The ornaments, scrollwork, or foliage, so employed, often very elegantly, were termed by the Italians *vignettes* or little vines, from their grace or beauty; which name is still continued to all engravings whose field is not bounded by an abrupt line, giving it the form of a picture, but which are made to die off on the page.

In England these stamps for the blank spaces of books



are all that wood engraving managed to do, until it degenerated into the most degraded condition, and continued to decorate only dying speeches and Christmas Carols,\* till Thomas Bewick and his brother John published the 'History of Quadrupeds' in 1790, which was followed by the 'History of Birds.' Here, for the first time perhaps, the designer and engraver were combined in the same person, and that a man of infinite humour, although coarse in his tastes, and possessed of a discriminating love of nature. No doubt he had many difficulties to contend with. But the public declared at once in his favour, and the progress of wood engraving since that time, or rather since the dispersion of Bewick's educated pupils, has been wonderfully rapid and triumphant. The illustrated books and pictorial newspapers of our day are among the 'modern miracles.' Many of our most inventive painters give their best ideas in the shape of designs drawn on the wood, and many good artists wholly occupy themselves with the fine pencil for the engraver, who is now so skilful that he can master any difficulty of execution, however 'cross-hatched' or scribbled. Nay, he can imitate Rembrandt's finest etchings with something like an approach to deceptive reproduction. It is difficult to imagine tact and skill of manipulation to go further: the rest depends on the designer.

#### COPPER ENGRAVING AND ETCHING.

In enumerating the arts necessary to the goldsmith of the middle ages, niello was mentioned as holding an important place. It consisted in filling with a black metallic enamel the fine incisures of an engraving executed on

\* There were, however, very creditable tentative examples of wood engraving appearing in English books before the Bewicks began; for example, those in a book on Angling, published in 1766.



silver. Theophilus, the early writer so often referred to, is the oldest authority regarding it: in his time it had already become an ordinary accessory to the metal-worker. Two centuries and a half later, when wood engraving and printing were becoming known in Italy, a goldsmith in Florence, distinguished for niello engraving, gets the credit of having *invented* engraving for printing, or rather, let us say, discovered the practicability of printing from engraved metal plates. This was Maso Finiguerra, than whom 'no one ever was known,' says Vasari, 'to put so many figures in so small a space, and with such correctness of drawing;' and, if we compare his designs with those of other artists then living, we shall find his reputation was well deserved.

Among the nielli preserved in the Cabinet of Bronzes of the Florentine Gallery, may be seen a Pax\* executed by Finiguerra, as proved by a public document still existing, in 1452 for the Baptistery. This little elaborate work is rendered historical by Finiguerra having been so celebrated by Vasari, and this being possibly the very piece of work he refers to. The only impression of this pax is preserved with great care in the Imperial Library of Paris: Finiguerra, of course, after his discovery, finished his work by filling it with the niello, preventing the possibility of further impressions being taken.†

The process of the discovery is thus described by Vasari: Before pouring the nigellum on the engraving, before, in-

\* A Pax was a small plate decorated with a representation of some sacred or traditionary subject; it was furnished with a handle at the back, and, on being kissed by the priest, was handed round the altar rails among the devout, after the Agnus Dei in the mass, to receive the kiss of peace.

† There is a sulphur cast of this work, or one very closely resembling it, of the Coronation of the Virgin, in the British Museum. Engravings, Case I. of the exhibiting glass-cases, 1873.

deed it was quite finished, wishing to see how it would appear, he proceeded to take a mould in clay, according to the custom. From the clay mould, a cast in sulphur was obtained, into which he rubbed lampblack, and so had an exact representation of the original when completed and filled with the nigellum. It occurred to him, when thus employed, that he might preserve a reverse of it, as the lampblack was easily lifted out of the lines by pressure; so he wetted a piece of paper to make it pliable, rubbed it against the surface with a burnisher, and found he had a beautiful impression. He now threw aside the sulphur cast, went over the same process with the original silver plate, and thus the engraver, from being an auxiliary to the goldsmith, became an independent agent of infinitely more artistic importance (1460). Such may have been the process of the early experimental artistic engravers; but we must transfer the scene to Germany, and put back the date perhaps fifty years. It is long since Strutt showed that the date 1460 is really posterior to that on existing prints executed in Upper Germany, and since his time many others have been observed, bearing an earlier or contemporary character. Martin Schön, whose work is in the highest manner skilful, died in 1486, leaving forty years' good labour behind him; and his master Zwott, or whoever he was, takes us back to the earlier years of the printing press. We have the master of 1466, and the numerous productions of Israel von Mechen, going back to the date spoken of by Vasari, while his master again brings us to an early year in the century.

Immediately the process was known in Italy, many artists began to cut their sketches on copper, or, as it is said, on pewter; the goldsmith and painter Pollaiuolo, Baccio Baldini, and a greater than either, Mantegna, being

earliest in the new practice. Yet they did not at first sell the impressions; perhaps these were not thought worth anything; but they thus preserved proofs of what they had done, or gave them to their friends. Ptolemy's 'Geography,' printed in Rome in 1478, was illustrated by twenty-seven maps engraved by two Germans; and in 1481 appeared in Florence an edition of Dante, embellished by engravings by Baccio Baldini, from designs by Botticelli, not printed on the pages, but pasted into spaces left by the types. These are executed with very fine lines of a scratched appearance, such as would not give off very many impressions. Botticelli himself engraved, but more frequently prepared the designs: this disunion of designer and engraver was soon characteristic of Italian practice, where the art very shortly became very mechanical, and except in the case of Agostino Carracci it was never practised by an original designer. At first, however, Mantegna adopted the graver; but the artist who elevated it to the highest position, in the opinion of collectors at least, was Marc' Antonio Raimondi.

While Francia practised the goldsmith's art as well as painting in Bologna, says Vasari, the best of his numerous disciples was a young man called Marc' Antonio, originally a worker in niello, and now a more skilful designer than his master. Albert Dürer had begun to publish his engravings on copper, and, seeing these, Marc' Antonio determined to give himself to the new art. He went to Rome; Raphael acknowledged his great power of easy and correct outline, took him into the army of his pupils, and it is said occasionally worked on the plates with him, making his own colour-grinder pull the impressions, that Marc' Antonio might not lose his time. This last circumstance shows us that the engraver in these golden days printed his own plates.



The engravings by Marc' Antonio are very numerous, and are principally from Raphael's pictures. They are certainly very inferior as engravings to the works of several contemporary German engravers, both in the incredible dexterity exhibited by those artists in execution and in the character expressed. Indeed, his copying, for sale in Italy, thirty of Dürer's woodcut prints of the 'Passion of Christ,' and also nearly all the twenty called the 'Life of the Virgin,' is an acknowledgment of his own inferiority in design at least, as his affixing Dürer's monogram was a proof of his dishonesty. Yet perhaps Raphael can never be so well rendered as he has been by Marc' Antonio's hand; and this superiority, coupled with the tradition of Raphael himself having worked on the plates, will always make the productions of M. Antonio historically important, although inferior to others then appearing. The best of all the early Italian engravers appears to me to be Andrea Mantegna, an artist of such trenchant skill that no technical difficulties could stand before him. His influence as a painter affected all the schools of Italy, which can scarcely be said of any other artist of the early or middle time. But it is not only in technical matters and knowledge of the antique that he is supremely distinguished; his poetic perceptions and his inventions are equally great.

After the first century of engraving in Italy, the prints issued became numerous beyond calculation, representing, for the most part poorly, all the pictures and decorations produced by the great artists.\* But of later engravers in

\* Hundreds of these old plates were bought by a dealer in Rome and reprinted with his name and date on them, Carlo Losi, 1773-4, rather puzzling the uninitiated. It was the same with another dealer, Salamanco, whose imprint, 'Ant. Sala. Ex.,' is a sure mark of inferiority in the impression.



Italy it is not necessary to speak, except, perhaps, to mention Raphael Morghen, whose restoration on copper of Da Vinci's 'Last Supper' has made the world better acquainted with that great work than any other means could have effected.

As Germany was the earliest seat of all the forms of engraving and printing, these arts were there developed in connection with original design by great artists. The earliest names which can be produced north of the Alps are those of Martin Schöngauer and I. von Mechen, followed by Albert Dürer, who is best known in England by his engravings.

Dürer left the studio of his master—whose works are essentially what our fathers used to call Gothic, a term of depreciation, now changed to one of praise—at the age of nineteen, in the year 1490; but none of his copper engravings, which are upwards of 100 in number, show a date earlier than 1503. These are very various in subject, and worked with amazing fineness and detail, in the completest degree unideal and individual, exhibiting the wrinkling of the skin, and the adipose deformities, where such are characteristic, and also the crushed and angular drapery, as if, as has been supposed, it was drawn from small lay figures clothed in wet cloth. This character of drapery, however, was not original with Dürer. Schöngauer, before him, displayed the same peculiarity, and it continued the fashion, one may say, for some time after in all German works.

In Holland also engraving sprang into full vigour at once. Lucas van Leyden had a power over character and a vigour of invention second only to Dürer, in the same uncompromising, realistic way. 'Nature occasionally astonishes us with prodigies, as if to proclaim her unlimited power, and

her right to depart from the ordinary regulations that govern the world.' Lucas's history, ushered in with this fine speech by Mr. Otley, is a rare example of precocity; some of his prints (and he, like Dürer, engraved only his own inventions) being done in his fourteenth year, as proved by the dates; and from this early age every year of his life produced its quota of engravings, without hindering the production of many paintings still extant. Among his works of the year 1520, we find some in which acid has been employed to corrode, in combination with the burin to grave; and also in the works of Dürer, dated as early as 1515. This is a most important feature in the development of the art, as the employment of etching ultimately revolutionised it, enabling the Dutch masters, and especially Rembrandt, to produce those admirable gems, now prized as much as their oil pictures, exhibiting the freedom of the sketch with the richness and depth of *chiaro-scuro*, so characteristic of that master. Before etching was introduced, engraving was necessarily hard and metallic, and the labour required to produce great depth of shade kept the early engravers within a narrow limit, the labour being greater, and the size regulated accordingly, as well as the fulness of shadows. With etching and corrosion by acid the artist finds himself emancipated from all the mechanical difficulties; he sketches on the etching ground with the same ease he would with a pen on paper.

Huber goes so far as to say that Lucas practised etching as early as 1509, having observed a maker of armour embellishing his steel cuirasses by this method of applying *aqua-fortis*. This must have been when Lucas was but fifteen years of age: but we must not reject the assertion only on that account, although others attribute the invention to

Albert Dürer. Subsequent engravers, however, did not immediately adopt this improvement, Aldegraver, Pentz, the two Behams and the other Little Masters, excepting Altdorfer, adhering to the burin simply. Even a century later, the best engravers seemed rather to despise etching, as we find no indication of it in the prints of Goltzius, in Bolswert (his print of Rubens's 'Lion-hunt,' for example), or in Jonas Suyderhoef's print of the 'Signing of the Independence of the Netherlands.' Wonderfully dexterous cutting with the burin indeed seemed growing into a pedantry at the time these last-mentioned masters lived; and we find such curiosities as the Veronica done by a single line continued round and round, widening or closing to give light and shade.\* The two processes, even when combined in the same person, were used separately on different works. Piranesi, the first important architectural and landscape engraver, used etching and nothing else in his large and skilful topographical works; his son adhered to the graver in his copies of the antique statues then being dug up about Rome in such numbers. But these two methods indicate the difference between the practice of the painter, who always prefers the etching tool, and the engraver, who rejoices in his dexterity with the graver.

In the power of light and shadow, as given in etching, Rembrandt stands alone; but Ostade, Berghem, Cuyp, Ruysdael, and many others of the Dutch school, produced beautiful etchings. When the painter thus realises his own sketches in a shape that can be multiplied, he takes the only sure means of spreading his works without change or alteration.

\* The works of Melan of Paris, done in this way with single lines in the manner lately mechanically done in imitation of relievó, are sometimes very nobly executed. His best time was about 1650.



While these masters were themselves etching, the engravers were at the same time employed in translating their finished pictures into prints; but, the inventive school of engravers having gradually died out, our interest in the art mainly ceases. I must, however, before leaving this early time, mention two or three men of remarkable power. Martin Hemskirke, Goltzius, and Spranger, were all three men of great and fantastic powers, and all singularly bent on revolutionising the quaint naturalism of their native German art, by importing the mighty contours and warped action of Michelangelo and the school of Rome. A bad object to have before them; yet they followed it with such force and enjoyment that it is a great pleasure to examine their works, allegoric and lifeless as many of them are. Other artist-engravers of the same time, such as Sadeler, I must refrain from speaking of in so short a sketch.

The English school of engraving is entirely modern. Before Hogarth we scarcely had any native engraver of note: all the education in the art he had was in the humblest walk, and only in the way of trade. Before his time our engravers were mostly Flemings; the earliest and best being Wenceslaus Hollar, who did many small prints in the time of Charles II. After him we had several portrait engravers of good power, both natives and foreigners, Faithorne, White, Houbraken, and Virtue, whose notes on our art-history Walpole edited. When the cartoons of Raphael, now at Hampton Court, were unrolled and properly appreciated, it was decided that they should be engraved, and Nicholas Dorigny was invited over for that purpose, lodged at Hampton Court, and knighted in the dark days of George II.

A new kind of engraving was very much practised then. It had been introduced some time before, and was called



mezzotint, Prince Rupert having the credit of being the inventor. John Evelyn published in 1662, in his work called 'Sculptura,' a chapter 'on the new method of engraving, or mezzotint, invented or communicated by Prince Rupert, Count Palatine of the Rhyne,' embellished by a specimen from Rupert's own hand. If the prince claimed the invention, he must have misinformed Evelyn, as the real discoverer of the process was Lieutenant-Colonel Louis von Liegen, in the service of Hesse Cassel, prints from his hand being found dated 1643, fifteen years before Rupert's earliest engraving, with the word 'inventor' after his name. This process, which was admirably carried out by Earlom, and has been united with legitimate engraving by late English engravers, may be shortly described. In the first place the plate is all grounded over by an instrument adapted to the purpose, so that the roughened surface, if printed in the ordinary way, would give a black impression. On this the design is drawn, and the effect produced by scraping and polishing out the lights, thus creating a chiaro-scuro without any outlines whatever.

As an engraver Hogarth is not to be considered; it is his invention, his inflexible tragic and satiric feeling, repulsive and gross as it is, that places him in the first rank of art. The best British engraver of last century was Sir Robert Strange, a Scottish Jacobite, who took arms in the rebellion of 1745. Narrowly escaping the loss of his head, he studied abroad, and was at last knighted by the reigning George, to propitiate him to use his powers in executing certain royal portraits. Strange in figure, and Woollett in landscape, are our best men in scientific line engraving; although we have had many of extraordinary artistic dexterity in the first half of the passing century. Now, however, the whole aspect of the art is changed; the

noble style appears to be dying out, falling before the facile and showy methods and mechanical contrivances lately introduced; while miniature prints, so beautiful and perfect in the days of the *Annals* thirty-five years ago, are entirely driven off the field by wood-engraving elaborated beyond the recognition of the old masters so rough and vigorous.

This revolution, one of the most remarkable in art matters in our time, has been partly brought about by the new methods of copying pictures, lithography and its development into printing in colours. Of these it is therefore necessary to say a few words.

Senefelder, whose bust now appears among those of other Bavarian heroes on the wall of the Fame-temple in Munich, was an actor in one of the theatres of that city, when, under the late King Ludwig, a prodigious artistic activity was in full play. Having to prepare copies of the parts for the stage, and little time to do it, he cast about for some means of shortening his labour. The calcareous slate found on the Danube, he observed, had the property of transmitting greasy writing to paper with great clearness, and that, while wet, he could recharge the stone with ink without smearing it. A little care and ingenuity brought his practice to as much perfection as enabled him to use the invention, and he soon turned his attention to the reproduction of pictures in imitation of chalk drawings, the grain of the stone being particularly favourable for that purpose. In a few years many artists followed in perfecting the method, which has been properly called chemical printing, in distinction from other methods which are purely mechanical.

The first essays in this drawing on stone with greasy chalk were necessarily rude, but its improvement was rapid; and new and important features were added. The

first was printing a tint with white lights under the drawing in black, which gave variety and a tone of colour to the picture—a successful improvement, which resulted in giving the character of a drawing on tinted paper with black and white chalks, and entirely threw into the shade the painfully elaborate imitations of chalks, by that kind of engraving called stippling, so much admired when practised by Bartolozzi and others.

This repeated printing, which it will be seen at once is all that is wanted to produce imitations of pictures in colours, was only a new application of an invention of the sixteenth century, which does not seem to have been then pursued very far, although many examples might be mentioned. One of these, exhibited at the great Manchester Exhibition, cut by Bartholomew Coriolanus, 1647, representing the Fall of the Giants from Guido Reni, about three feet by two in size, was printed from wood blocks, three printings giving four tints, by leaving the colour of the paper for the lightest part of the picture. The stone surface has rendered much finer tints possible, and a very few years have sufficed to make Chromo-lithography so powerful and complete that water-colour pictures are imitated with a precision which renders it difficult to distinguish between the original and the counterfeit.

Within the last decade of years, or little more, while the noble old art of line engraving as practised by old Landseer, Pye, Wilmore, &c. in landscape, and by Raimbach, Burnet, Doo, Robinson, &c. in history, is apparently dying out in England, the wonderful discovery of sun-printing, Photography, has been followed by many processes facilitating transfer-printing. These are all mechanical and scientific, not artistic, and not noticeable here.



## LECTURE XI.

## EARTHENWARE.

THE fabrication of hollow vessels by modelling and baking clay is, we are assured, the most ancient and most general of all the useful arts, as well as the most necessary to the well-being and comfort of the human family. The old philosopher who abandoned all other adjuncts of civilisation as hindrances to his independence retained a cup where-with he might solace himself at the running streams. The boring operations of Mr. Leonard Horner in Egypt furnished him with a scale whereby to measure time by the Nile deposits, and, at the depth of thirty-nine feet, the instrument is *reported* to have brought up a fragment of pottery, thus furnishing a record of man, in at least an early stage of civilisation, 13,500 years before the date of the experiments in 1854! \* Such may be the antiquity of earthenware, but

\* The results of ninety-five vertical borings through the alluvium are recorded in two Memoirs to the Royal Society in 1855-58. In the excavations near the Colossus of Rameses II. at Memphis, measuring from 8 inches below the present surface, there were 9 feet 4 inches to the lowest part of the platform of the statue. Supposing the platform laid in the middle of the reign of Rameses, viz. 1361 B.C., that date added to 1854 gives 3215 years, during which the above sediment was accumulated, or a mean rate of increase of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in a century. Below the platform there were 32 feet penetrated, but the lowest 2 feet consisted of sand, below which there may have been no true Nile sediment: thus leaving 30 feet of the latter. If



the experiments would require to be very carefully conducted to enable us to depend on so extraordinary a result. Jacquemart mentions Egyptian ware of 3850 years before our era, which is a great antiquity, and the Babylonian bricks, with vitrified glazes, now in the Louvre, carry us beyond the destruction of the city B.C. 522.

The potter's wheel itself is visible far back into the ages of mythology, and beyond the time of Job, and the chance remains of its work furnish the most reliable historical data. 'From the pottery of the tombs we learn the domestic manners of nations long since passed away, and trace the geographical limits of the great empires of the world. The extent of ancient Greece, its colonies and conquests, is clearly to be traced through each division of the Old World by the Grecian funeral pottery. The limits of the Roman empire are in like manner deducible; beyond the spot where Arminius repulsed the legions, no trace of Roman pottery has been found; and the frontier line of the Roman dominion in Britain is marked out in a similar manner. The extent of the Mahomedan empire in the Old, and the Aztec dominion in the New World, would alike be clearly pointed out by their pottery, if no other record of their conquests had been transmitted to us.\* In Greece, the Ceramic artists received the highest honours, medals were struck, and statues erected to them. The greatest sculptors and noblest architects, such as Polycletus, worked in concert with, and furnished designs for, the potters, so that

this amount has been deposited at the rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in a century, it indicates a period of 10,285 years before the middle of the reign of Rameses II. The sediment at the lowest depth is exactly similar to that of the present day. At the lowest part of this boring, that is at a depth of 39 feet from the surface of the ground, a piece of pottery was apparently recovered.

\* Mr. Marryat, preface to the 'History of Pottery and Porcelain.'

many of the sculptured vases, and some of the painted ones, were among the most prized works of the highest art the world has seen.

The Romans had several kinds of pottery, differing from each other in date, materials, and principles of fabrication. Almost all of them possess some interest as works of art. Wherever they settled as conquerors, kilns and factories showed themselves, and mounds of *débris* are still turned up showing the extensive waste of the workshops, exactly as we see it surrounding our potteries at present.

More durable than iron and brass, more beautiful than marble, and capable of the application of all processes of decoration, the Ceramic art has always attracted the regard of kings, been prized by governments, and assisted by laws, except in this country, where the manufacture has thriven without external aid. Thus the Dukes of Urbino assisted in the introduction of the beautiful Majolica; Maria Theresa in Germany, Frederick the Great in Prussia, Elizabeth and Catherine II. in Russia, aided in developing the porcelain manufactories in their several states; while in France we find the national character preserved by the court ladies taking the lead, one of them giving her name to the delicate rose colour, the 'secret' of which is now said to be lost. In China there is even an idol or patron to whom the potter prays. This is the martyr Pousa, whose history is still related, no other than the antetype of those corpulent little figures we see in collections, which the French call by the name of *magots*.

The various earthenware of the ancients, the vases of Greece and its colonies, and of Etruria—pale yellow or fawn colour, dull red, ashy-grey, and dead black, distinguished again as unglazed, lustrous, and varnished—have engaged the study of many learned writers and critics.

Even enquiries into particular classes of vessels, their names and uses, have expanded into volumes, and afford fascinating subjects for the disquisition of the archæologist. To enter into that field is not, however, my object; but only to sketch the history of our own manufacture in connection with that of other modern nations whom we now supply.

In exploring the foundations of walls or stations left by the Romans during the long possession of this island, fragments of earthenware, of the dull red colour, and of the kind called lustrous, are constantly turned up. The better order of Romans used ware from Samos, the most esteemed manufactory of ancient times; and English antiquarians have given the name of Samian ware to all the red Roman pottery turned up in this country. It has rilievo decoration, sometimes very artistic, at other times a little barbaric, and a smooth, glossy surface. This shining, surface has been called lustrous or varnished; and seems the result in certain clays of a thin vitreous covering, in others of polish, but must not be confounded with the *glaze* exhibited by modern ware. The ancients are said to have had no glazed earthenware in common use, although they were acquainted with a powerful glaze of different colours applied to ornaments, for the coating of water pipes or other purposes.

From the retirement of the Romans, the relapse into barbarism in all the arts shows how difficult it is to lift a rude tribe into foreign civilisation at once. Every people must work out its own form of civilisation for itself; centuries of step-by-step progress are necessary; the wants must be felt, and as they become pressing the national intellect meets them according to the mental form of the age, employing the means provided by the locality and fitted to the climate. Neither the moral habits nor the religion, the



literature nor the arts, even the most useful, of those southern conquerors, took firm hold on the Britons. The moulding and casting, the kiln, every other particular of the art of potting, appear to have gone out, to have died down to the old level, on the disappearance of the legions, not only in Britain, but all over Europe.

All the different races of Europe had fabrics of their own, very rude ones, still seen in the graves of the aborigines. From these, the native practice recommenced, apparently, as good earthenware plays no part whatever in the economy of the early middle ages, as far as evidence exists; and its first appearance worthy of notice is in the south, and as an adjunct to architecture in the shape of tiles. The custom of using tiles for covering floors and the lower parts of walls (*dados*) came from the Spanish Saracens, and is distinctly traceable. Through them we arrive at a Byzantine origin, or at least we carry the invention back to the artisans of Alexandria and Damascus, the possession of the latter city having begun a great change in the habits of the Moslems.

The process of the lustrous glazing of the Roman pottery, already mentioned, appears to have disappeared about the 300 of our era, and even the Greeks of the lower empire seem to have had no fictile manufactory of any excellence. Not only do the early middle ages furnish us with no artistic pottery: they have left scarcely any documentary evidence that such objects had ever been seen. The only record bearing on the subject is in the treatise of Theophilus, who gives a few words to the Greek method of 'painting vases in divers colours of glass,' a branch of enamel—indeed, true enamel, vitrifiable colours being the application described. The few notices we meet with in later times, chiefly in inventories, show that the rare pieces



of earthenware, even in kings' palaces in the fourteenth century, were oriental. Thus in the long inventory of Charles V. 1379, we find 'ung petit pot de terre en façon de Damas;' and another, a 'biberon sans garnyson' in fashion of Damascus. To make this distinction, native pottery must have existed, but of such inferior quality as not to be worth mention.

This process of applying enamel colours to tiles and vases the Saracens carried with them in their conquests of the shores and islands of the Mediterranean; and, when the Moorish palace of the Alhambra rose in Spain, the art was copiously applied to its decoration. All the floors, it is supposed, were so laid, and the walls for four or five feet up were covered with blue and green patterns in the tiles called from their colour *Azulejo*, the cornices and roofs being also decorated in this manner. The earliest specimens taken from the Alhambra are not much older than 1300; but before this time painted pottery had been introduced into Italy by the Pisan conquest of Majorca. At the opening of the 1100, the Mussulman kings and pirates were the terror of Europe; one king of Majorca, in 1113, named Nazaredeck, had no fewer than 20,000 Christians in bondage as computed by veracious historians. Pisa was then rising into power; and, the Pisans being exhorted by their archbishop at the Easter festival to undertake the liberation of their brethren, a crusade was organised. The voyage, now a day's work, turned out long and perilous; the fleet was on the coast of Catalonia for a whole year, and after another year of a sanguinary siege Majorca was taken, and the numerous fleet of Pisan galleys loaded with spoils. Among the valuables, the painted Moorish earthenware (apparently unknown, at least in the west of Italy, till then) is mentioned among the spoils, and

pieces were used as trophies and architectural embellishments, Moorish plates being still visible encrusted in the walls of the most ancient churches in Pisa, as well as in those of other neighbouring towns. In San Sisto and Sta. Apollonica they are on the west front, and a row of them is also to be seen running along the sides under the cornice. Blue and yellow or brightish green are the colours they exhibit. The manufacture in Majorca, now under Christian rule, still continued; crusaders and pilgrims brought away specimens as they passed, and the making of coloured tiles sprang up in connection with the building of cathedral churches in Normandy and England as well as elsewhere.

The Majorca ware, when the manufacture spread into Italy at a later time, became very artistic and celebrated under the name of Majolica, and the application of glazed earthenware to architecture was afterwards followed up by Luca della Robbia, who cast his large circular reliefs and statues in potter's clay, fired and glazed them, and applied them as sculpture to the buildings of Florence.

But, notwithstanding this accident of conquest had introduced glazed pottery for domestic purposes thus early, there is no record of its having been imitated for two centuries after at least, unless we consider Passeri's argument on behalf of the originality of his countrymen made good. The only examples of early earthenware in our museums are of Arab production, or Hispano-Arabic, long confounded with Italian Majolica, which at first very much resembled them. The finest examples of this beautiful and delicate pottery are the vases of the Alhambra. On these the richness of the design, brilliant colouring, and precision of the forms with which they are covered, render them works of great value in the history of ornamentation; they are the highest types of the Moresco style applied to manu-

factures. All the known pieces of this Hispano-Arabic are now highly prized. They are divided into classes. The first, as described by Labarte, is decorated with ornaments of a very brilliant colour nearer a copper-red than gold, the ground being almost hidden by the design, which consists of birds in the midst of flowers. The second class is covered with monochromatic Moorish design, and Spanish heraldry of a golden yellow tint; a third and later class presents enamel colours united with ornaments of the golden yellow tint.



Hispano-Moresco Lusted Ware. Height 21 inches. South Kensington Museum.

Passeri, who 'contends for the honour of Italy,' considers it probable the yellow and green plates still visible in church architecture were Italian, and that the art was invented by Luca della Robbia; but this third class of Arabic ware, which exhibits these enamels, is decidedly anterior to the time when that great master began his labours in 1430, and made use of a stanniferous enamel to colour his rilievo. Luca was born in 1388, and quickly established a high



repute as a sculptor ; but, having begun life as a goldsmith, and being curiously informed in the scientific processes of his time, he cast about for some means to do without the labour of the chisel, and found it in the pure white enamel which he either invented or adopted. Immediately his triumph was hailed all over Italy ; although productions of this kind have no artistic finish, their application to architecture became a fashion which continued in his family for a hundred years, the last of the line, Girolamo della Robbia, having built and adorned the château near Paris, for Francis I., where he died. The works with which Girolamo decorated this palace came to a curious end. In the account of expenses we find him receiving 38,860 livres, about 15,530*l.*, for the enamelled terra cottas. After having been inhabited by the French kings down to Louis XIV., the château remained little used, and was sold in the Revolution as national property for 8,000*l.*, with orders that it should be demolished ; when these so-costly works of the last Della Robbia were bought by a paviour, pulverised, and converted into cement. Indeed, the works of Luca alone now remain prized, and of these the finest are on the walls of Or San Michele in Florence, in the Foundling Hospital there, and on many other buildings, presenting a bright and charming effect. Their colours are principally, if not exclusively, blue, yellow, green, and purple, the major part of the surface being left white, including the faces and other nude portions of the figures, he having never, as it would seem, found a pigment to produce the delicate carnation necessary to complete the whole.

From the date of Luca's invention or adaptation, the ware so celebrated as Majolica rose into repute. The principal manufactories were at Pesaro, Gubbio, Castel Durante, and Urbino, the native place of Raphael, whose name was for-



merly used to denote the entire manufacture. Majolica is, indeed, sometimes still called Raphael ware, from the idea that he actually painted on the plates with his own hand. Whether this tradition has any foundation or not cannot be positively affirmed ; but the finest specimens of the painting are not earlier than 1540, twenty years after Raphael's death. There are many of the designs of Raphael found in Majolica, but we may presume these were copied



Vase or Chalice, early Majolica, 1470. Plate, about 1540. Both *Amatoria* and gift-pieces. South Kensington Museum.

from the prints by Marc' Antonio ; the new art of printed engravings having spread the works of the favourite Roman master.

From 1450 to 1500, the first period of Majolica, when it bore the name of Mezzo Majolica, it was dry and stiff in execution, and exhibited little but grotesques of an early Renaissance character, and heraldry with centre profile portraits of its great patrons of the noble houses of Sforza

or Pesaro, or their consorts, or frequently the head of the Deity; but after that time a finer material was employed, called 'porcellana,' when a higher class of artists applied themselves to the work, and noble compositions of the prevailing Raphaelesque character from the Bible or antique fable appear. Its highest perfection may be dated about 1550.

At this time, 1550, Bernard Palissy, 'the hero of potters,' as Brongniart, the historian of pottery, calls him, was about forty years of age, and absolutely undergoing those years of martyrdom in the development of enamel glazes which have made his name one of the most romantic in the history of the arts. Well known as his history is, we must shortly recount it.

Palissy was a Frenchman, self-educated in several things, and established as a surveyor at Saintes, after having travelled, and attained by unaided perseverance some ability in drawing, design, and chemistry as it was then practised, dealing principally with the properties of metals and minerals. Aspiring to show his powers in art, and make his fortune at once, he was inspired, by seeing a beautiful cup of enamelled pottery, to give himself entirely up to the pursuit of the secrets of its manufacture, and for sixteen years struggled against all the obstacles poverty and ignorance, his own as well as his friends', could accumulate in his way. None of his biographers have explained why he did not repair to Gubbio or Castel Durante, and try to get direct initiation into the Majolica methods, nor has he alluded to this obvious plan in his writings. There were now so many ateliers in Italy that the secrets must have been all attainable; indeed, they had been carried to Germany nearly fifty years before by Kirchvögel, an artisan of Nürnberg. Palissy's way was to work everything out for

himself, and in the discovery of enamels all his savings were spent without success. Having replenished his purse by a survey of the salt marshes of Saintonge, he again built his kiln and lost his money. He could not now pay his assistant, so he gave him his clothes. Again he built a new kiln with his own hands; and, when his wife and family were in the last stage of destitution, he actually kept up the heat in the furnace, at what he fondly hoped was the moment of success, by throwing into it the remaining tables and chairs of his wretched home. At this stage he ran the risk of being treated as a lunatic, and also the additional danger, as he had embraced Reformed opinions, of being seized as a heretic. Success came at last, and then we find him patronised by the king and the grand seigneurs, and producing in immense quantity dishes now identified with his name, as well as vases and statues for gardens, decorated stove-tiles, small altar-pieces, and even glass. Let us hope Madame Palissy had the finest furniture Paris could provide. But shortly after came the dreadful measures whereby the old Church party put down religious reform; his workshops at Saintes were destroyed, and he arrested. The king claimed him, and had him brought to Paris and lodged in the Tuileries, where he lay on the dreadful night of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Saved from death, he was a few years after thrown into the Bastille by the Leaguers, and, now in extreme old age, Henry III. visited him in his cell. 'Sire,' said the white-bearded potter, 'those who oppress you have little power over me, because I know how to die.' But the additional blot of the martyrdom of Palissy was saved to French history by his natural demise in prison about 1589, at the great age of ninety.

The fayence of Palissy is characterised by peculiar qualities as well as by its singular style. The material and



the white enamel are impure and not equal to the Majolica, and there is generally a coarseness about the execution, but in the figure his form is fine and his ornamentation is good. His most obvious characteristic lies in the imitations of nature, which are so exact that the fossil shells he employed, and which he had picked up himself, are all recognised by naturalists as those belonging to the localities. The fish are those of the Seine; the plants and reptiles those of the environs of Paris. He often employed the natural object, taking a mould from it and applying the cast to the surface of his dish. The greater part of the Palissy ware, more particularly the plateaux loaded with objects in relief, snakes, frogs, fern leaves, &c., called *pièces rustiques*, were destined to be placed as ornaments upon the large dressoirs, armoires, or buffets, which ornamented the dining halls and rooms of the time.

Subsequently to the date already mentioned as that at which Majolica was at its perfection, and Palissy beginning his successes, the great Italian manufacture began to decline. Instead of simple figure-subjects from good masters, landscapes, friezes, all sorts of later Renaissance conceits or 'capricci,' cupids, birds, trophies of armour, vignettes of musical instruments and monsters, appear; a decline takes place in the drawing, a more mechanical and less intelligent handling in both drawing and shading is visible, and even the colours, which never reached a full scale, being only yellows, blues, greens, and purples,\* become paler and poorer. The Ducal establishment at Urbino was found too expensive for the state of the exchequer, and from about 1580, Majolica was made only for common purposes, and

\* There are some pieces made by one artist at Pesaro, about 1480, having a ruby red, and the same colour appears on some made afterwards at Gubbio, about 1518, but these are the only exceptions.



declined artistically. Still it existed and produced quantities of earthenware. In Venice and in Naples manufactories were established in the seventeenth century : in these places and elsewhere, the production of fayence continued with certain excellent qualities, although not of the character of the best time, and in the last century attempts were made to restore the Majolica art and also to imitate Chinese porcelain. This new attempt was at Pesaro, but it soon ceased to exist; the pieces then made, however, may not be considered the last efforts of Italy to maintain a manufacture which once constituted one of the brightest gems in her artistic crown. A manufactory admirably imitative of the best Majolica, only finer and neater in execution, is successfully carried on by Count Ginori.

In 1736, a distinct and original style of soft pottery sprang up at Capo di Monte in Naples; the pieces being for the most part modelled in natural shapes, and curiously coloured. This ware had but a short success, and is now also extinct, and Italy is almost entirely supplied by a single English factory. From Bellinzona to Milan and Venice, my travelling companion, who was interested in the subject, used to amuse the moments of waiting for dinner by turning up his plate and triumphantly exhibiting the name of Wedgwood; and I found the same proof of English commerce to hold good in Florence and elsewhere, when I remembered to apply the test.

It has been mentioned that coloured earthenware was introduced into Nürnberg very early. Previously to that time the Germans possessed the art of making pottery with a strong green glaze, there being one or two specimens still existing, especially one mentioned by Mr. Marryat in the Royal Museum of Dresden, with a Scripture subject of exquisite modelling dated 1473. Not only at Nürnberg and other

places in Franconia, but in Strasburg and other towns on the Upper Rhine, manufactories sprang up, all of which are now changed into porcelain establishments.

But the Dutch ware made at Delft, called by some the parent of Western pottery, is the most celebrated, says Mr. Marryat, not only on account of its singularity of form and colour, but also for its excellent qualities. It is not pure white, but slightly tinged with blue, the surface smooth and even, and the prevailing colour used in the decoration is blue. What date to assign to the commencement of this ware it is difficult to say. At all events it is as old as the beginning of the 1500. But the Delft ware principally known is that made after the Holland trade with Japan had initiated the Dutch into the forms and ornaments seen on porcelain. The imaginary animals of the chimæra class, the three-ringed bottle, the tall and shapeless beaker, and the large circular dish, may still be seen in most collections of Delft ware; and so admirably are they imitative of both the patterns and the blue colour of the original that nothing but the touch and the closest inspection will suffice to detect the difference.

During the 1600, or rather towards the close of that century, the custom of lining fireplaces with small tiles to reflect the heat came into fashion. Every house in England built about 1700 had the splay of the parlour fireplace, or the whole visible interior of the chimney, covered by these tiles, the production of the potters of Delft. These were sometimes white, but generally covered with pictures from the Bible; Moses receiving the tables of the Law, and Tobias with a great fish in his hand and an angel beside him, I still remember from my infancy so vividly I could draw them from memory. The very lowest conceivable art they were, but even their very defects seemed honest

and quaint. The pretty anecdote of the mother of Dr. Doddridge giving him his first lessons in Bible history from the tiles of the fireplace is well known.

All the different kinds of earthenware yet mentioned are what are called soft. If you apply the penknife to an unglazed portion, it will be found that the steel readily makes an impression. Ceramic productions as a whole are divided into soft pottery, hard pottery, including stoneware, and porcelain. The modern history of the first of these divisions we have now slightly reviewed. The second comprehends all English ware, except such as emulates China: and the third division comprises the productions of Dresden, Sèvres, and all our own beautiful Staffordshire ware.

The hard pottery of Europe is perhaps earliest represented by the stoneware of Flanders. In Germany also the manufacture is comparatively old. There is likewise a fine hard earthenware known by the name of Henry II., which being prized by collectors ought not, I suppose, to be omitted, although of little historical importance. It attracts interest, indeed, partly by its history having been until lately entirely unknown, at the same time that its great beauty and elaborate Renaissance design challenge admiration. This French manufacture ceases without leaving any result.

But the production of stoneware, which is common ware glazed with salt, continued in Flanders and Germany for a long period in great repute, decorated for the most part in a quaint native style, and still exists, although only for common purposes. The finest specimens of the Grès-Flamande are as characteristic and picturesque as anything ever done in earthenware. Foreign or classic taste had never been brought to bear upon the old-fashioned potters of the Low



Countries, so that the grey-beards, as vessels were called having a bearded head under the spout, flagons, and measures, large jugs with modelled coats of arms on the side, and pewter lids, beer flagons and tankards, all with rich blue foliage on grey ground or grey foliage on blue, and never repeating the same design as far as we know, retained the native shape and characteristics. The blue figures on grey are generally the earlier, the ornamentation of both earlier and later very skilful and often highly artistic. The stoneware of the Rhine has a rich brown colour, and the tall beer cups of Germany and Flanders, which were capriciously and completely covered with panelling or arches containing figures or compositions in relief, generally retained the hue of the paste without the application of colour.

At what period the manufacture of earthenware was imported into this country, or whether the indigenous production had gradually improved to any great extent previously to the time of Elizabeth, it is difficult to say. The first reliable fact in the history of the art in England seems to be that the ware called Elizabethan by collectors was really made at home, and at the date indicated by its name. It is a species of stoneware much resembling that in use at the same time in other countries, having relief ornaments of a later Tudor description, with poorly drawn figures and foliage. The jug called Shakspeare's jug was until lately considered the most remarkable specimen of English ware of the early period, having been kept with great care for the last century, and a good imitation of it made. It is about nine inches high, of a cream colour, the decoration being many small groups of the gods of the Roman mythology, divided from each other by vertical bands. Although it has been long handed down in the family of the great poet,



it is now believed by good judges to be nearly a century later in its manufacture than the accredited date, 1603; so that we cannot consider it as affording proof of the existence of ware of the excellence of this specimen in the time, or at the court, of Elizabeth.

The porcelain from Japan and China was now beginning to be introduced in small quantities, by the Dutch especially, and traditionary anecdotes are not wanting to prove it to have been known and prized by the maiden queen. The late Mr. John Fenwick of Newcastle was possessed of a porcelain cup or mug said to have been sent to the Tower by that queen, that the Earl of Essex might take the sacrament from it on the morning of his execution; an anecdote, apocryphal or not, characteristic enough of our Tudor queen. This porcelain from the East by-and-by entirely changed the manufacture throughout Europe.

## LECTURE XII.

## PORCELAIN.

THE history of all the existing European earthenware called china or porcelain dates from the introduction of Chinese and Japanese examples first brought round the Cape by the Portuguese, who, after Vasco de Gama had shown the sea-way to the East, were allowed to build a fort at Macao in return for their services in destroying the pirates of the Labradores. Europe was thus made acquainted with a pottery very different from, and very superior to, the best hitherto seen in the West. Accordingly, from its first appearance, it was eagerly sought after, and no doubt its appearance in the market may have discouraged the Italian as well as other potters. Compared to common chinaware, the best Majolica is coarse and impure in material and colour. At the beginning of the 1600, the Eastern ware began to supplant the art of Gubbio and Castel Durante on the sumptuous buffets.

The antiquity of porcelain in its native East is immensely exaggerated by the Chinese themselves. M. Stanislas Julien, in his '*Histoire et Fabrication de la Porcelaine Chinoise*,' places the invention between the years 185 before, and 87 after, our era. The earliest authentic record Mr. Medhurst, the eminent Chinese scholar, could find, is in a poem dated B.C. 175 to 151, and this relates to the green porcelain. Champollion, Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, and others, indeed, supported the native claims for a higher antiquity,

when they found small Chinese bottles in Egyptian tombs not previously opened, as was supposed—tombs as old as eighteen centuries before Christ. But, singularly difficult



Small Chinese bottles found in Egyptian tombs. (Marryat.)

as the problem thus presented for solution may be, the lettering on these little bottles proves them to be modern, comparatively to the tombs in which they were found. The form of the letters is that of a late alphabet, and the words themselves on two of them are verses by poets contemporary with our eighth century.

Many of the present factories at work in China are a thousand years old, several 1500 or 1800, and their extent is prodigious. At King-te-tchin, in the province of Kiangsi, there is one employing nearly a million souls, and having fully 3000 furnaces, it is said, in constant operation.\* The fact of the principal material, kaolin, being plentiful in the locality is the determining cause for the establishment of a factory. The difficulty of finding a substitute in the countries nearer home stood of course in the way of imita-

\* See Julien's translation from the Chinese 'Histoire de la Por. Chin.' with additions by Salvétat and Dr. Hoffmann.

tion. And as there is no manufacture in which so many processes and so many chemical combinations have been tried, or are still necessary, so there is none in which secrecy has been so much resorted to as a means of protection. This is illustrated by the history of our next hero in the art of pottery.

The story of Böttcher is, as M. Brongniart says, quite as curious as that of Palissy, and, although it has been often repeated, may be shortly related here. John Frederick Böttcher was an apothecary's assistant in Berlin who was suspected of understanding the secret of making gold, and for that reason ran away from the authorities of his native country into Saxony. Here, however, he was not much better off. The Elector took possession of him, would not credit his denial of possessing the art of transmutation, and placed him under his chemist Tschirnhaus, who was then labouring to discover the universal medicine. Such were the delusive objects to the pursuit of which modern chemistry is much indebted. This Tschirnhaus was a man of extensive learning and a good chemist, and Böttcher immediately became very uneasy under him, and not a little anxious how his adventures were to end, not foreseeing that his powers of transmutation were to turn out real, not indeed by chemical legerdemain, but by the discovery of porcelain.

The crucibles wherewith he worked were made of a red earth from Meissen. In the ardour, or pretended ardour, of his pursuit of the philosopher's stone, these were subjected to all degrees of heat, and suggested to him the use of the same clay for ware which he began to make with success. This was little else than a kind of red stoneware, although it got the name of red porcelain, and was the first of his discoveries in that direction. The fixed idea of transmu-



tation was, however, still to rule Böttcher's destiny. This material, from its colour, was thought likely to assist him to the more important step of the tincture of gold, and the Elector carried him off to the château of Meissen, where were prepared a range of furnaces and other appliances. Here everything was given him he could wish for; only a guard was placed upon him, who followed him about, sat by him in the carriage and at table, and was to him, in short, what the Germans call a *döppel-ganger*, or spectre in our own likeness. This severity was increased on the invasion of Charles XII.; Böttcher and three workmen were sent under an escort of cavalry to the impregnable fortress of Königstein, the place where the treasures of the state were deposited in time of war. Here the personal character of Böttcher came out vigorously; he sang, made rhymes at his furnace, and kept up the spirit of the workmen, who began to plot an escape, looking upon themselves as prisoners who had been guilty of nothing. Here it was he perfected in the first place the firing process of his red Meissen pottery.

Just then, a rich ironmaster of the district riding over Aue, near Schneeberg, observed his horse's hoofs stick fast in a white, soft earth; and being a sharp man, and wearing, as everybody else then did, a wig powdered with wheaten flour, the scheme of reducing this white earth into an impalpable dust, and selling it in Dresden for hair-powder, flashed into his mind, and was immediately acted upon. One morning, Böttcher, waiting till his wig was ready, lifted the powder box of his valet, thought it very heavy for wheaten flour, carried it to the laboratory, found it to his great joy the long-sought kaolin, the substance which forms the basis of white porcelain, and knew in a moment that he could now rival the Chinese in their hitherto inimitable manufacture.

Böttcher's first porcelain was made at Meissen ; and here for ten years, enclosed in the strictest cordon of guards, the secret was kept. But, as neighbouring cities and states were all on the watch to seduce the workmen, they now and then escaped, the first being Stölzel, the foreman, who was cheerfully received in Vienna, where he began the manufacture.

Thus commenced the great revolution in earthenware, and the establishment of the manufactories of Meissen, Dresden, and other places, so celebrated for many successive years.

The earliest style of design was, as might be conjectured, an imitation of the Chinese in form and ornaments ; but, at Böttcher's death in 1719, the parent factory was placed in the hands of artists. Kändler, the sculptor, and Häroldt, a painter and modeller, were entrusted with the direction of the works. These two began the production of statuettes and all kinds of objects and vessels great and small, from figures of animals nearly natural size, to the most delicate miniatures ; but it is to be regretted that the art of ornamentation was not purer and better understood when the works of Dresden were in their palmiest state ; and the same may be said of the Sèvres china, so beautiful in its colour and material.

Under the directorship of Kändler were made those 'graceful little figures, so brilliant in colour and so true to nature,' at least in Labarte's critical opinion, which show at once the costume and the taste of the period. Down to the Seven Years' War this manufacture flourished, and just before that unhappy term it attained its highest success. After the War, 1763, the works were resumed with renewed activity. But now they were carried on in the new taste. Gavin Hamilton, the Scottish painter, was forming the Vatican museum, the Museo Pio-Clementino,

by excavations and the discovering of endless statues and busts; Winckelmann's writings had fashioned the criticism of the Germans on the classical models; and in European art generally the latest form of extreme subjection to ancient authority was beginning, which culminated in the French school of David and in the furniture and dresses of the earlier years of the French Revolution. The porcelain in a small way emulated this spirit. With imperfect knowledge, or with any but the highest powers, nothing can be more rapid than this imitation. Down to the early part of the present century this taste reigned, and the Dresden statuettes or groups of Graces or Muses of the candelabra sort, then made, are worthless as art.

One interesting feature in connection with this introduction of porcelain must not be forgotten, and that is the opening of popular Schools of Art, now established all over this country, as well as in France and Germany. At Meissen, the want of education was early felt, and in 1754, a School of Art, *Kunstgewerbschule*, was opened for the workmen, wherein drawing, modelling, and painting, were taught.\* The first was established under the care of the then celebrated painter, Dietrich. Under him, seconded by other artists, this School of Art effected a great reform, and after the resumption of the works the execution was much more perfect. In this respect the pseudo-classic productions

\* The *École de Dessin* was opened in Paris in 1767. Shortly after one was established in Edinburgh, called (by the name of its governing body who managed certain funds for its support derived from estates forfeited in the rebellion of 1745) the Trustees' Academy of Drawing. When the movement first began in London twenty years ago, these Schools of Art were established under the name of 'Schools of Design,' possibly a transfer instead of a translation of the French name, but productive of abundant misunderstanding.



alluded to were very efficiently carried out by the skill of the workmen. But since the opening of the present century the taste has reverted to the more native kind of design practised at an earlier period; and under the present director, Kühn, the royal manufactory of Saxony has placed itself anew among the first in Europe for the production of ornamental ware.

Beautiful as the German porcelain articles of various sorts were during the best time, they were soon surpassed by those of another royal establishment, that of Sèvres near Paris. Here the production of the purest colours has been quite successful, and the processes of moulding and of gilding brought to perfection. Always in advance in every matter of taste, simply as taste, when the material and the mechanical means were once attained, the French showed at Sèvres the liveliness of their invention and ingenuity of resource. The art of design was unhappily at a very low ebb, however; and, if the chamber for the 'Illustration of Wrong Principles' opened at Marlborough House for a short time had been rigorously carried out, many of the most costly pieces of Sèvres, and Dresden too, might have there found a place.

The produce of this establishment was for a long period confined to soft pottery: the introduction of the paste for hard porcelain was long attempted in vain, but it was not till about 1770 that the white tenacious earth was accidentally, as in Germany, brought to light. A few years before this took place, the sculptor, Charles Adam, then the principal proprietor of the Sèvres works, on his return from Berlin, where he had been erecting the statue of Field Marshal Schwerin for Frederick the Great, presented to Louis XV. some pieces of Berlin porcelain, the modelling of which had attracted his attention. Through these,



Madame de Pompadour took 'a passion' for pottery, and under her patronage Sèvres rose to unrivalled skill, and the works grew into immense importance and extent. Vases for ornament, and table services for use, limited the range of production, but within that range all that could be



Sèvres Vase (*Rose Du Barry*), Or Mola plinth, 14½ inches high. Bought by the Marquis of Hertford at Bernal's sale for £1942 10s. the pair.

done in painting was effected. Watteau designs, portraits of the notabilities of the day, especially the ladies, and picture subjects of every kind, appear on the spaces left in the intense *Bleu de Roi*, turquoise; and a little later, when Pompadour was no more thought of, in the colour called after the new favourite *Rose Du Barry*, a bright lucid carnation, perhaps the most lovely colour ever produced in enamel.

Besides these colours, the charming yellow called *Jonquille* and the green *vert-pré*, were employed as grounds. The artists engaged on the best pieces were skilful in giving the gay character most suitable and most required. The pictures representing children and cupids employed in all sorts of pleasantries are very graceful; they are disposed in the medallions shaped irregularly by the endless rococo scrolls, and some of them are by the hand of Boucher himself.\*

The director of this establishment, M. Regnier, was deprived of his appointment and imprisoned at the Revolution in 1793, but the works were not sold or suppressed, as nearly all other royal and privileged institutions then were; they were managed by three commissioners till 1800, when the First Consul had the good fortune to appoint the late M. Brongniart sole director. Son of the architect of the Bourse in Paris, one of the best reproductions of Greek architecture, he was an eminent geologist, and at the same time noted as a chemist, and he originated the Musée Céramique at Sèvres, which illustrates the history of the art, ancient and modern, by an immense series of examples.

\* The prices of the very finest pieces have risen, indeed, of late years to an amazing height. The pair of *Rose Du Barry* vases bought by the Marquis of Hertford, at Mr. Bernal's sale, for 194*l.* 10*s.*, considered so exorbitant a price at the time, have been far exceeded of late. At Mr. Barker's sale, June 1874, a *garniture de cheminée*, of five pieces, brought 2250 guineas; an oviform *Bleu de Roi* vase, with military subjects by Morin, brought 1750 guineas at another sale, at Christie's, on June 12, 1874; and two *Rose Du Barry jardinières*, painted with exotic birds by Aloncle, 2450 guineas. This is a great price for such perishable articles; but the 'crowning lot of the sale' was the set of three pieces, a *vaisseau-à-mât* and *jardinières*, *Rose Du Barry* and green, painted by Morin. These were knocked down to Mr. Rutter for 10,000 guineas!

His '*Traité des Arts Céramiques*' is the best authority on certain subjects connected with the history of pottery. Under him Sèvres lost none of its importance, while Philippine Constans, Madame Jaquotot, and others, have fully sustained the character of the painting department to the time of his death in 1847.

Notwithstanding, however, the high standard which so complete a manufactory sustains in France, and also the existence of other factories, where imitations of old styles, or peculiar kinds of ware, such as the coarse brown ware made at Beauvais, are produced, the French white fabric for daily use is very inferior to ours. At the great Paris Exhibition of 1855, the articles exhibited by Copeland, Minton, and others, were bought with avidity, these being at other times almost prohibited by the weight of duty. Indeed, no other portion of the entire show, not excepting the Bohemian glass or Paris bronzes, was so attractive, or, I am inclined to think, showed a completer union of manufacturing science with artistic taste.

The great name in the annals of pottery in England is Josiah Wedgwood, born at Burslem in Staffordshire, which county, from its great natural advantages, must always remain the greatest seat of the trade. Before his time towns now united were miles apart, filled by a straggling population, producing, at many small kilns, skillets, platters, and so forth, of the commonest description. Yet he had worthy precursors, who showed similar ingenuity though with minor results. About 1710, twenty years before Wedgwood's birth, two brothers from Nürnberg, Elers by name, finding a capable red clay in the vicinity of Burslem, began there a manufactory, and, as usual in the early history of all such undertakings, tried to keep their methods secret. This they did by employing none



but the most ignorant workmen, and even idiots. Their very precaution was the means of discovery. A man of the name of Astbury had the talent to counterfeit the idiot and the courage to persevere in the character for some years till he had learned all he wanted, making notes of the processes and rude drawings of the machinery used. This being accomplished, he started working himself, and in a few years the Elerses, driven out by competition, and suffering under the prejudice against foreigners, left the country for London, where they are supposed to have aided in the establishment of the Chelsea works which sprang up shortly after and attained to considerable fame and extent. The son of this Astbury made sundry improvements, particularly the introduction of flint, now so important an element in our earthenware, calcined to a white powder.

Another great step in the improvement of common ware was also taken just as Wedgwood began his career. Dr. Wall, a physician of Worcester, originated a company called the Worcester Porcelain Company. Hitherto all ornamentation had been done by hand. Dr. Wall, although Brongniart questions his right to be considered the inventor of the plan, is said to have conceived the idea of transferring impressions from engraved plates, and so saving the immense expenditure of labour in painting patterns with the brush. Whether he entirely originated the idea or not, he first carried it into practice, and this plan, so fruitful in an economic point of view, distinguishes the Worcester manufactory in the history of earthenware. The works here, however, did not long continue, although producing very good ware, imitative of the blue and white Nankin, and the bright colours of Japan, and subsequently of the *Bleu de Roi* of Sèvres, as well as the Dresden patterns of birds and insects. In this



country, printing was quickly adopted elsewhere; but in France it remained long unknown, and was little used till the beginning of the present century.

And here I may as well mention other potteries that have distinguished themselves in England, before returning to Staffordshire and Wedgwood. In several places the production of porcelain sprang up, flourished for a short time, and gradually decayed. Stoke, Hanley, Burslem, were destined to absorb them all.

The earliest was at Chelsea, where the production of ware little better than opaque glass had long existed, rudely painted to resemble common china and sold for it. This ware gradually improved, but not very greatly till the Hanoverian family came to the English throne. 'The custom,' says Mr. Marryat, 'so frequent among German princes, of attaching a porcelain manufactory to their courts, no doubt influenced George II. to give his especial patronage and encouragement to the Chelsea establishment already existing. He caused models, workmen, and even materials, to be procured from Brunswick and Saxony, and indeed enabled it to produce articles for the use of the court and the nobility, which rivalled in excellence those of the more esteemed fabrics of Dresden and Sèvres.' Between 1750 and 1765, while under the direction of a foreigner called Spremont, Chelsea china was in such repute that sets were put up to auction on being drawn from the oven, and the dealers were to be seen surrounding the doors till that moment arrived. Horace Walpole says, in a letter dated 4th March, 1763—'I saw yesterday a magnificent service of Chelsea china which the King and Queen are sending to the Duke of Mecklenburg. There are dishes and plates without number, an *épergne*, candlesticks, saltcellars, sauceboats, tea and coffee equipage. In short, it is complete, and

cost 1,200*l*.' But at this very moment the manufactory, seemingly so triumphant, was very near closing its doors. It had always depended on patrons; it produced little else than articles of luxury; and, when the Duke of Cumberland died and Spremont retired, it went down, after struggling with memorials to Government praying for protection and assistance. When the loss became too heavy to be continued, the place was shut up; the moulds, models, and many of the workmen were then removed to Derby, where an adventure of the same description was just commencing.

Dr. Samuel Johnson was at one time possessed with the notion that he could simplify or improve porcelain manufacture, and used to shut himself up in the Chelsea factory two days in the week, trying experiments, his housekeeper going with him carrying a basket of provisions. Visiting the Derby works afterwards, during their short span of life, Mr. Boswell records that 'the doctor thought the china beautiful, but too dear, justly observing that he could have vessels of silver of the same size for the price here charged for porcelain.' Plymouth and other places tried to establish works also, but the same poor fortune happened to all in succession: difficulties and the outlay caused them all to close after a few years of effort and struggle, so that our common pottery remained at its former price, as well as comparatively coarse and unadorned.

Wedgwood's first venture was in the making of knife-handles and such things, in imitation of agate and tortoiseshell, at Stoke. Shortly afterwards he produced the cream-coloured ware, soon known as 'Queen's Ware,' Wedgwood having sent a service to the queen and been highly commended, and requested to call the novelty 'Queen's Ware.' This was the beginning of his success. In 1760 and two following years his most interesting discoveries took place.

Six different kinds of pottery were issued from his workshop.

In some departments of taste, those matters of taste called in England by the French word *vertù*, more especially, there are periodical or accidental fits of public furor. At the period in question the collecting of china was in the ascendant. In many mansions of this period may be seen niches in the wall fitted with little shelves for the exhibition of cups and saucers, or other small objects. Chimney-pieces rose into pediments, with brackets like steps attached to the sloping angle. Looking-glass frames for suspension on the wall were similarly furnished, each side of the mirror having a series of brackets, every one just large enough to carry a minute china cup. Sir Charles Williams, quoted by Mr. Marryat, had already in his poems laughed to scorn English potters, exclaiming ironically over the first attempts of Staffordshire—

Such work as this can England do?  
It rivals Dresden, and out-does St. Cloud.  
For lace let Flanders bear away the bell,  
In finest linen let the Dutch excel,  
For prettiest stuffs let Ireland first be named,  
And for best-fancied silks let France be famed:  
Do thou, thrice happy England, still prepare  
This clay, and rest thy fame on earthenware!

Little did this not very witty gentleman think how true a prophecy his satire contained. But a stronger satirist was on the outlook, only on the other side of the question, as *he* quizzed, not the struggling native improver of our manufacture, but the inordinate collector of merely curious samples. Hogarth painted his 'Taste in High Life' in 1742, showing us, in the most ludicrous point of view, the china con-



noisseurs of the day. Nothing can be better than the inane expression of the gentleman, a superannuated beau,

an old and finished fop,

Cork at the heel and feather all at top :

it seems even happier than the affectation of ecstasy of the lady on finding that her cup and his saucer fit each other ! Since that day English ware has become as much prized by collectors as any other.



From Hogarth's 'Taste in High Life.'

Sir William Hamilton had just returned from the south of Italy when Wedgwood's processes were about completion. He lent some of his specimens from Herculaneum, and others lent also cameos and antiques of different kinds, all of which were imitated to a miracle by the Staffordshire potter. The most beautiful specimen of antique glass yet discovered, the Barberini Vase, since called the Portland,



was then offered for sale by auction, and purchased by the Duchess of Portland for 1800 guineas, under agreement that it should be lent to Wedgwood for the purpose of his making a copy.

To do this was no easy matter, and it was only after a vast expenditure of ingenuity that he succeeded, by casting a layer of white opaque glass over the deep blue of the body, and grinding it down by a diamond, something in the manner of seal-engravers, in producing a cameo imitation perfectly well done. The expense, however, was so great that, although he sold the fifty copies he made at fifty guineas each, they did not reimburse him. Before he undertook this experiment, the production of white figures on blue grounds had employed him, and this beautiful form of decoration he now carried to perfection. His ordinary method was to cast the blue body first by itself, and then to plant on it white reliefs, leaving the fire to fuse them together, the finish being the work of the hand. There is now another method. The intaglio ornaments in the surface of the mould are filled in with the white paste, then the blue body being poured in attaches them to it, the whole coming out of the mould in one piece. By the first of these methods Wedgwood executed many lovely things. Flaxman prepared several of the small models which he carried out, and these are, and perhaps will always continue to be, esteemed among the finest things ever done in this department. They are to be seen in the best cabinets of Europe, by the side of the most delicate specimens of Sèvres and Dresden, which in point of art they leave immeasurably behind. But, besides these fine productions, Wedgwood did a greatly more useful work in communicating to common hard pottery the vivid colours and brilliant glaze which, until that period, had been seen only

upon porcelain, at the same time bringing it within the means of the general public both at home and abroad.

From that day to this we have gone on improving in the art and extending the trade, the quantity now produced supplying a great part of the world. Nearly a half of the whole exportation goes to America, which great continent depends almost entirely on England for earthenware. The commonest sort has been attempted in the States, but only in a small way and with little success. Into Germany and Italy it is admitted by weight, so that the finer and lighter the ware the less is the price enhanced by duty. The declared value of these exportations is now something like a million and a quarter. The processes now followed, and the materials employed, are numerous. Clay from Devon, kaolin from Cornwall, flints from Kent to whiten the south-western clay, borax from Tuscany for the glazes, are all necessary. When the vessel is fired, it comes out of the furnace bisquet; printing or painting is now called into play, which must be fixed by firing again, as well as the glaze, which finishes the work. Six distinct processes—but, if it be finely gilt and decorated, many more—are thus necessary before it is sent off, it may be to a distant market, to be sold for threepence.

All this has, indeed, not much to do directly with the question of art. The scientific knowledge brought to bear upon the manufacture, and the beauty of the material, may exceed those of any other country, without the artistic sense, and skill of hand, being called in to share the praise. But in the region of taste we have advanced as well, although the pleasure of grumbling, which the Englishman is said to enjoy so much, has made it quite safe and usual to pass a sweeping censure on all our manufactures from the art point of view. In the great Hyde Park Exhibition

of 1851 this was everywhere said, and with justice in many walks, especially in carvings and *pièces de luxe* generally; but in the Paris Exhibition, four years later, the French decided differently for us. In our manufactures, the material and the fabric receive, as they ought to do, the first consideration; the adornment only the second. So strongly is this arrangement of things rooted in the English mind that any departure from it is to be suspected; the article, whatever it be, will break, or tear, or go to pieces to-morrow, and the maker, if he seeks external before economic qualities, is hardly an upright man. Our earthenware in the Paris Exhibition was found to combine both excellences, but of course a good deal of extra attention had been bestowed on the design of our contributions.

In the same Exhibition were many imitations, not only of Palissy ware, but of Majolica, Etruscan, and other kinds. These were for the most part merely curious. Modern chemistry makes it easy to go beyond any of the triumphs of ancient practice. In illustration of this I may end with an anecdote related by the late Mr. Baring Wall in a lecture delivered at Salisbury. Pugin was assisting in the production of those tiles now so admirably made by Mr. Minton, when a question arose between the architect and Mr. Butterfield with regard to the employment of a certain blue colour in the composition of designs in imitation of old examples. Mr. Butterfield demurred, saying there was no precedent for the colour. Pugin, with his characteristic energy, and, I may add, with more than his usual discernment, replied, 'If the old fellows had known that colour, they would have jumped out of their skins with joy.'



## LECTURE XIII.

## GLASS. PAINTING ON GLASS.

ONE of the most important steps in the progress of architecture was the introduction of windows protected by glass. In northern climates, openings for light defended from cold and rain are more absolutely necessary than in the south of Italy; but, even there, during the winter the most sumptuous house of ancient times must have been such as we should consider a very imperfect lodging, and at any season the smaller apartments must have been so. In the house called the House of Sallust in Pompeii, two cabinets connected with each other were indeed found with small glass panes. Fragments of glass are said to have been elsewhere found in casements among the ruins, and Winckelmann pronounced in favour of the Romans having had a knowledge of flat glass, and the use of it for windows, stating that he had seen pieces of window-panes from a house in Herculaneum. There are passages in Seneca, and in the narrative by Philo the Jew of his reception by the Emperor Caligula, that *might* apply to glass in windows, but which may only mean talc, or a lamina of transparent alabaster, which were both used for the purpose now better answered by glass panes. In the five small apsis windows of San Miniato near Florence, there is still an example of



sheets of alabaster being so used. These are beautifully coloured when penetrated by the morning light.

Glass they had plentifully, however ; it was employed by the ancients for many purposes, and particularly for making drinking vessels of inferior size, and for mosaic, cut into small cubes, or cast in that shape, the art of glass-making being one of those that go far back beyond the historic period. In all museums, necklaces, amulets, and many curious things, in request by the Egyptians, may be seen, proving that vitrification with colour incorporated in the substance is as old as the Pyramids. The art continued to be practised in Alexandria down to the period of Arab occupation. Augustus required that glass should form part of the Egyptian tribute, which made cups and vases of the material fashionable in Rome ; and, in the reign of Tiberius, manufactories were there established, the methods of blowing, staining, working on the lathe, and engraving the surface, being all practised. Theophilus describes the method of making figures of gold embedded in the material, such as we noticed in the curious little vessels found in the Catacombs, and preserved in numbers in the Vatican. But the most remarkable example of Roman glass, or rather of ancient glass, is the Portland Vase, in the British Museum, now removed from public view. It is composed of two layers of glass, the body of the vase being a rich blue, and the figures ground out of a layer of opaque white originally covering the whole surface. The imitation of an onyx cameo is so perfect that, in ignorance of any method by which it could be made, it was long considered a natural production, though what precise stone it was remained a question. Breval regarded it as chalcedony ; Bartoli, sardonyx ; Count Tetzi, amethyst ; and De la Chausse, agate !

This most beautiful example of the powers of the antique manufacture and art was found in a marble sarcophagus within a sepulchral chamber, about two miles and a half from Rome, supposed to have been the tomb of Alexander Severus. Another example, of the same colour and mode of production, was found in Pompeii in 1839, and is now in the museum of Naples. It is not a jug, but of the amphora shape, and must have been fitted with a tripod stand, which, being probably of gold, was stolen on its discovery. The design on the Portland has employed the ingenuity of many without any satisfactory elucidation of its meaning: perhaps the most ingenious being that given by Dr. Darwin in the notes to his 'Loves of the Plants.' He supposes the subject to be the reawakening of the soul in the regions of the dead. The Pompeii vase, on the other hand, not being funereal but bacchanalian, is covered by an admirable foliage of the vine, with masks and cupids.

The artistic excellence of these two vases, as well as the difficulty of their manipulation, as they have been engraved or ground out by steel or diamond, affords some key to the understanding of some anecdotes of ancient glass that would otherwise appear altogether incredible. For example, it is recorded of the Emperor Nero that he gave 6,000 sester tia, nearly 50,000*l.*, for two cups of no extraordinary size with handles; and, about the same time, such cups were in more request, and cost more, than those of gold or silver. The two vessels in question were of perfectly clear glass; but there is a fragment mentioned and figured by Mr. Pellatt, showing a portion of a figure reclining on a couch, composed of five layers of glass, the inner being the deep blue seen in the Portland and Naples examples, and the outer red. The arrangement is shown on the following page.

|       |      |
|-------|------|
|       | Blue |
| White |      |
| Green |      |
| White |      |
|       | Red  |

The method of coating glass with repeated strata, and cutting them through to produce the picture, although it shows great perseverance, and although the art ultimately exhibited is very perfect, is still an evidence that the knowledge of processes was then limited. But perhaps, if we had specimens of all the different productions of the Romans, we should find they were acquainted also with effective and speedy modes of operation. They were certainly able to produce pictures in glass by composing coloured fibres together, and securing the whole by fusion with transparent material. Winckelmann mentions a plate exhibiting the figure of a duck, which was equally visible on both sides, the coloured fibres passing right through the substance. They would seem also to have been able to make little figures embedded in a different coloured mass, closely resembling the Millefiori or Venetian balls, where streaks and spiral wisps of colour are visible within the transparent mass, such as are now sold as chimney-piece ornaments. In Rome there was a street appropriated to the glass-makers, who were considered as a very honourable body of citizens.

When an industrial art requires extensive appliances in the shape of furnaces and other works, wars, pillagings, and political demoralisation, such as those that overspread Italy, are certain to destroy it. Accordingly we hear no more of glass vases or any other glass till the time of



Theophilus, who describes painted windows, and speaks of the making of glass as common to the Western nations; particularising at the same time the formation of cups and drinking-vessels embellished with incrustations of gold, with painting in enamel, and with ornaments in filigree, as exclusively Greek art.

From his full and exact descriptions, we must suppose that all the fine processes of antiquity were still preserved and carried on in Constantinople and Damascus, and that other methods had been added consisting of the use of painting in vitrifiable colours, of which the ancients have left no trace.

Thus the Venetian glass-makers were descended in the same line traced out by other arts from the skill and proficiency of antiquity: viz. the Byzantine emigration, and the immediate tuition of the degenerate artists of the Lower Empire. There is reason for believing that, while church windows were in general use, and had reached their highest beauty, in the West, no other application of glass was known till the Venetian trade carried cups and other drinking-vessels abroad about the middle of the 1400.

In the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the city of Venice had become the most commercial of the civilised world. She had established her pre-eminence by means of navigation and trading to the East, the productions of which, both natural and artificial, entered Europe entirely through Venetian hands. The manufactured articles in which she traded were imitated by the citizens, and it is certain that an uninterrupted series of acts of the senate relating to glass-making may be produced from the latter part of the 1200, proving its previous existence to some extent, and the special interest taken in it by the Government. This care over the rising art showed great sagacity,



since for several centuries all quarters of the world were inundated with its productions, and the sums of money procured to the republic by this branch of industry alone would defy calculation.

These furnaces and glass-works were in the city, thus necessarily exposed to fires, till in 1287 a decree of the Great Council had the effect of removing them; when the island of Murano (which is about a mile removed from the congeries of islands bearing that city of the sea) was chosen as their locality. Here all the glass of the world (except that for windows) was manufactured for many years, the whole island being covered by glass-houses of various descriptions.

At that time imitation jewellery was the principal production—beads, false stones, gems, and other trinkets; and these were exported to Africa and Asia in exchange, a trade that became prodigiously extensive and lucrative. Marco Polo, returning to his native city in 1295 from his official residence of half a lifetime at the court of Kubla Khan, able to instruct the merchants in all the markets, and by what routes to reach them, gave great impulse to the trade. The names of the two men most successful in the invention of coloured beads (*margarites*) and the imitation of precious stones, were Cristoforo Briani and Domenico Miotto.

This movement retarded the progress of better work during the 1300. In fact, during the whole century nothing but this trumpery false jewellery was produced; and not till the middle of the succeeding, when Constantinople finally fell under the Turks, was there much useful or elegant work done in Venice, at which time also the revival of taste in art began to influence some trades. We now hear of 'Venice glasses' with admiration, and find wonderful stories regarding them, such as the belief that they would break if poison

were poured into them. This property Sir Thomas Browne refers to, but remarks, 'Yet have we not met any of that nature.'

From an early period the Venetian glass-workers were treated with honour by the state, and by foreigners also, the Emperor Henry III., on his visit to Venice, granting nobility to all of them. They enjoyed remarkable privileges, and their daughters were considered equal matches for the sons of the best patricians. The island of Murano was under their civil, criminal, and administrative legislation, and no doubt the Bellini, and other artists then forming the school of Venice in the same island, were but small men compared to them. But, when the trade extended to all the countries of the West, which were eager to rival the Venice glass, the Council of Ten placed the superintendence of the factories in the hands of its chief, and laws were enacted characteristic of the romance of that city and its fame for brave justice. The twenty-sixth article of the inquisition of the state decrees 'that, if a workman transport his art into a foreign country, a message shall be sent to him to return; if he do not obey, the persons most nearly related to him shall be put in prison. If, notwithstanding the imprisonment of his relatives, he persist in remaining abroad, an emissary shall be commissioned to put him to death.' M. Daru, who has given us the text of the decree in his '*Histoire de la République de Venise*,' adds that he found documentary evidence in the archives of two instances wherein the execution of this punishment had been actually carried out.

These glasses were of a thousand different shapes, the simplest being the best, the highly decorated being bizarre rather than excellent. The common drinking glasses were very wide and shallow, with spiral lines of colour in the

tall, thin stalk. Of the various processes employed we cannot here speak, nor of those carried out by the Bohemians. In Bohemia the manufacture is of considerable antiquity, but of late their filigree glass (lines of colour worked into the transparent) and the frosted (cast rough and ground) have arrived at the highest excellence, and employ an immense number of people.

The principal use of glass, and the most interesting in modern history, is its application to architecture; and the painting of church windows during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries has given it an importance as a fine art, equal or superior to that of sculpture or picture-painting during the same period and in the same countries.

The earliest glimpse of glass being used for windows in Christian churches is a curious one, being a circumstance mentioned by Gregory of Tours about 525 of a soldier having committed sacrilege by entering a church (the church of Brioude) to steal; making forcible way in by the window, he broke the glass with which it was covered. And, fifty years later, the poet and presbyter Fortunatus celebrates the church of Paris in verse, dwelling on the splendour of the glass windows, and boasting that the interior illuminated in the morning is like the fountain of light itself, the day being held captive in the sanctuary. This poetic description is just such as one would expect from a beholder accustomed only to nearly dark or lamp-lit interiors.\* The same writer mentions also the windows

\* The very same images of speech, M. Lesteyrie remarks, are used by Procopius in praise of the windows of the church of St. Sophia, re-edified by Justinian, near this date, perhaps a little later. The wall in that church was most probably gold mosaic, and reflected powerfully. 'Glory to God who has permitted me to achieve so great a work; I have excelled thee, Solomon!' were the words of the emperor at the dedication.



of St. Martin's Church ; and in 655, when the cloister of Jumièges was built, its windows were covered with glass. In our own country we find that Biscop the Thane, who became monk and abbot, a great traveller, having been four times to Rome, sent to France for glass-makers to come over to furnish certain windows in the churches of his two monasteries of Jarrow and Wearmouth, about 682 ; and nearly at the same time Wilfrid, Bishop of York, had glazed windows placed in a new church. These, we are told, were the first seen here, and no doubt Wilfrid's came from France as well as Biscop's, that country being apparently the earliest seat of the art, and the principal one all through the period of its successful practice. Indeed, at a later time, long after glass was made in England, it was often required in agreements that the glass should be brought from beyond seas, the ancient superiority having created a prejudice in favour of French materials.

A very early author quoted by M. Eméric David, enumerating the arts at the beginning of the eleventh century as practised by different peoples, attributes to the French the making of precious glass for windows ; and, in a charter of Charles the Bald (much earlier, of course, in date), the houses of two glass-makers are mentioned, Ragenulf and Balderic by name. England was at that time certainly behind the neighbour kingdom in the architectural arts. These French glass-makers were also the artists who designed the windows and produced them ; and undoubtedly the honours and privileges of rank confirmed to those who followed the 'art and mystery' show that they were considered not only as artists, but as adepts in a scientific mystery. At first the privilege to establish glass-works, and at the same time to be considered nobles, was granted to several families in Normandy by the dukes of that province. These



may have been private friends, the manufacture being an emolument ; but the same rights were continued again and again by Norman kings of England, and by French kings to workers elsewhere—in Champagne, Hainault, Anjou, and other places. This is the more remarkable as no other handicraft or profession of any description was distinguished in this manner.

Perhaps if we had a sufficient number of examples, we should find the worst effects to have resulted, a few stereotyped forms being all that the various masters had at command. As it is, the art in its best time, during the thirteenth century, is very much below the contemporary sculpture in variety and artistic handling, although, simply considered as ornament, the earliest painted glass is perfect in its division of spaces and distribution of forms. This inferiority, however, we must remember, was also the case, in a less degree, with painting on walls and panels, the difficulties in the way of representing nature on a plane being greater than those attendant on imitations in round and solid materials. But still the pictures on windows are not equal to what we might expect, and show, more vividly than any other art, the childhood of the modern mind. Let us consider the middle ages in this light, let us view them as the infancy of modern analytical intellect, and much otherwise difficult to understand receives a degree of explanation. The pedagogue of the noble child was the church, the legends of saints and the apocryphal gospels were the mental pabulum applied, and these painted windows were the difficult and resplendent hornbooks by which he, humbly housed and painfully fed from day to day, was taught to look up with fear and wonder. This expression of fear and wonder is more or less stamped on every face in the works of the middle ages: fear, because they lived nearly in the

dark, and had so vivid a faith in evil spirits; and wonder, because the world about them was nearly as little known to them as the world to come, and within was a prophetic consciousness of what has since become science. Without theatres, without public halls for any popular purpose, without libraries, picture-galleries, or music, the church represented all these under the government of a dogma. Even the comic spirit of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries found vent in connection with it, devising grinning and contorted gargoyles, and console heads and groups, or, on the woodwork, hiding coarse jokes under the stall seats. The earliest evidence of attention being paid to the forms of natural foliage and flowers is to be found on the capitals and string-courses of our Early English and Decorated sculpture. Sympathy with the life of the lower animals too, is there exhibited more vividly than in any previous condition of art. All these features are to be found to some extent in the painted glass; but we must look on the scheme of the painted window as a reproduction of the work of the architect and sculptor, not as a direct imitation of nature. I do not mean merely that the forms employed in ornamentation, and the style of the drawing, are common to glass along with the other arts, but that each window came to be treated as a niche, with its border (gloriously coloured, as the sculptor could not manage), enclosing the statue of the saint, also resplendent, under a canopy, gilded it may be, but still a canopy of stone tracery, such as overhung statues on porches or walls. From the first, this canopy appears, and it continues down to the last of the good glass, not decreasing in importance, but, on the contrary, becoming more and more elaborate, and stretching out in size till it occupies more than a half of the entire height. We may divide all painted windows into three orders—

Figure, Medallion, and Tracery windows, and this following of the type of the architectural sculptor prevails in the two first mentioned; the medallion window being a succession of panels enclosing groups and histories such as are seen on the arcades and spandrils of contemporary or earlier buildings.

The treatment of the large figures and the smaller groups in these works is exceedingly interesting. The simplicity and earnestness, the ignorance of technical facilities, the



Norman Medallion, Cathedral of Sens.

blindness to beauty, and the mystical learning of the early middle ages, blend together in the representation of spiritual things through the rudest material forms. The daring directness, too, with which they go towards the ends of their art—splendour and mosaic richness—is delightful in these modern days of tints, tones, gradations, and harmonies. In early glass the human hair is made crimson or blue if either colour is wanted in that part of the



design, and trees are divided into equal masses of the several colours required for variety. All the saints hold the weapons of their martyrdoms; St. Denis and St. Valerie, the female patron of Aquitaine, hold their heads in their hands, while an ornamented empty nimbus surmounts the neck; St. Peter displays his key as large as a spade; kings are always holding their sceptres upon their shoulders, and bishops always raise two fingers in the act of blessing. The souls come out of dying people like new-born babes, and the guardian angels take hold of them. The devil is the black monkey with horns and tail repudiated by Göthe's Mephistopheles; sometimes his body is black, and his head crimson, which certainly makes him very frightful. The abode of this individual is frequently painted, the mouth of hell being actually the mouth of a monster with tusks and glaring eyes, down whose throat the wicked are crammed. Heaven also appears, with angels playing on bagpipes, dulcimers, harps, and guitars, which exclusively musical occupation later art perpetuated.

In pointing out a few of the distinctives of the different periods of glass-painting, we must bear in mind the architectural changes from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. Mr. Rickman has given the simplest table of these changes, which is as follows:—

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Anglo-Romanesque or Norman . . .                           | 1066 to 1189 |
| Early English Gothic . . .                                 | 1189 „ 1272  |
| Middle-age Gothic, commonly<br>called Decorated } . . .    | 1272 „ 1377  |
| Late English Gothic, Perpen-<br>dicular, and Tudor } . . . | 1377 „ 1546  |

—the last date being that of the death of Henry VIII., when Tudor becomes Elizabethan and quasi-Italian. Between



each of these periods there is a transition, which many have distinguished as an intermediate style; but the above few dates are easier to remember by themselves, and you will observe that each period is about 100 years, except the last, which is nearer double that duration. With regard to the glass prior to the earliest of these dates, we know nothing. There are records of coloured glass windows of earlier times, as we have seen, in Paris and elsewhere, in Jarrow, and in the East, but no descriptions: the probability is that they were simply mosaics imitative of Roman and Byzantine marble and glass patterns.

#### ROMANESQUE OR NORMAN

later windows, it is conjectured, were the same; and till the rise of the Pointed architecture, glazed windows, even in churches, were rather prized, while the openings were small, so as to be easily shut by wooden lattices covered by thin horn. M. de Caumont has given a round-arched window in his '*Abécédaire d'Archéologie*,' to which the date 1135 has been assigned. The only windows that have a chance to be older than this are two given in the work by M. de Lasteyrie. They are not simply tracery, but figures, one being a half-figure of St. Timothy, and the other the twelve apostles and the Virgin, from the cathedral of Mans. As this last, discovered by Gérante, the celebrated glass-painter of Paris, is attributed by him to a date prior to 1100, we must so accept it. Indeed, internal evidence would prove it to be older than any other picture on glass we know, the drawing, costume, and action being all peculiar, and very much reminding us of some of the Saxon illuminations of a date earlier than that claimed for the glass. Dark ruby and

blue are the invariable predominant colours of the first period.

The two windows in St. Denis near Paris—one the history of Moses, the other exhibiting various subjects—are the earliest authenticated by a date. They are both medallion windows, and were placed by the Abbot Suger, who died in 1151, the figure of the abbot appearing in one



Pattern Window, supposed to be of 1155. De Caumont.

of the subjects. These do not present any features very distinct from many others preserved in France, and some in England, of a little later date. The upper portions of the lights, above the double row of three circular medallions placed over each other, have circular medallions of foliage, a peculiarity not often seen; but otherwise they are similar to many other Norman windows, the ground being

blue, barred by ruby, which at a distance gives a purple character by the blending of the colours.



Norman Border. 1180,

#### EARLY POINTED (EARLY ENGLISH).

The border of late semicircular and Early Pointed windows is broad, with foliage of different colours, returning along the base. In Canterbury Cathedral the best specimens are to be seen. They are medallion windows, which may be considered the generic form of the Early Pointed painted window, although figure windows with simple rude canopies are also found, as well as tracery windows, many remains of which last are to be seen scattered over the country. These pattern or tracery windows are white or slightly greenish or cobalt-coloured glass, the purest then made, and the design is composed of the conventional

foliage of the period, the leaf exhibiting an indefinite number of points as in Norman, or restricted to three serrations as in the early English time before natural leafage commences. In Salisbury Cathedral are some magnificent early specimens of white pattern windows, possibly coeval with the building, which was completed in 1258.

These pattern windows admitted a great deal of light, while the medallion window, composed as it was of dark blue and ruby principally, gave gloom and solemnity to the interior. The aspect of Salisbury, if it was filled, as Mr. Winston thinks, with white tracery only (except the three west windows, which he says were always richly coloured), must have been a great contrast to Canterbury, where the medallion designs admit but little light now, and could never have been much clearer. The five lancets in York transept, called the Five Sisters, are also to be noticed as excellent specimens of white tracery; they have been frequently copied.

In manufacture and execution, the glass of this period is inferior in lucidity to later material, as well as much thicker; the outlining or pencilling is very strong and rude. The principal colours are blue, very dark, and also a light tint, and ruby which is exceedingly rich, sometimes being so dense as to appear like black. But other colours also are always present—purples of several shades, and greens. The flesh colour is generally a yellowish pink in English glass, although many instances may be found of a dark ruddy colour; and the mosaic arrangement being arbitrary all the surface is bright and varied.

Of the style and sentiment of drawing we might speak with great praise, and carry with us the authority of all the writers on the subject, were we to confine ourselves to the



single subject of glass, there being a great deal of noble and touching feeling in the attitudes and expressions of the figures on Early Pointed windows. But, in comparison with the illuminator, the glass-painter is inferior, although the proportions of figures in the productions of both are nearly the same, the figures being very tall. The lifelike expression is even greater in the next period, that of the

#### MIDDLE GOTHIC (DECORATED),

in which the three general forms of window already described continue. The single figure under the canopy, however, is more frequent, and sometimes of a very large size, or one appears over another, each having a canopy; and, these being generally yellow, the predominating rubies and blues, so prevailing in older times, are counter-balanced. Greater variety is otherwise visible, and the white glass takes a lemon-yellow tint; the blue is lighter, and the flesh colour also: indeed, towards the end of the period, or after 1350, we find white glass used for the faces and hands not unfrequently.

The first appearance of a *stain* added to the 'pot-metal' colours, as glass coloured in the melting-pot is called, now takes place in the shape of a bright yellow hue, here and there added in small pieces on the white tracery or grisaille windows. The borders are now generally separated by a narrow white line from the stone-work, and are composed of a stem with leaves turned off at regular intervals. The ground of the medallions is now also diapered by waving foliage derived from nature—hawthorn, oak, vine, ivy, or leafage less obviously specific. The natural foliage of the Decorated style forms indeed the most excellent peculiarity and great step in advancement of the period, and appears in all the stone, wood, painted glass, and wall

decoration of the time; the heads of crosiers and other similar matters are also charmingly foliated. On the other hand, the hatched ground which gave effect to the tracery on white windows is nearly abandoned.



Tracery Window, 1350.

White windows of a still simpler character than the older ones are likewise seen. These are formed by intersecting lines that cover the whole with diamond shapes called quarries from the French word *carré*, 'square;' in each of which spaces a rosette, leaf, or conventional ornament, is painted. Sometimes these windows have coloured panels in the centres, formed by heraldic shields or other devices. On the whole, therefore, while we find more art and study of nature in the Decorated, we have a less gorgeous and solemn effect than that given by the intense mosaic of the earlier style. Power of colour

decreases, and, if we can decipher the subjects and the entire design more easily, we do not find the same mystical and wonderful character.

#### LATE GOTHIC (PERPENDICULAR).

From the end of the Decorated period, the change in the style of painted windows is very gradual. The truly Perpendicular character is rather later than the date assigned by Mr. Rickman as the commencement of Late Gothic, 1377. In glass, perhaps 1400 may be a better date, as exhibiting with certainty the finer and more delicate superseding the forcible naturalism, and the increase of white and light yellow in the draperies, borders, and canopies. More shading and stippling and a higher finish are soon visible in the workmanship; a great variety of combination and device is also seen, but the effect of the whole is poorer. The single figure under the immensely elongated canopy is the favourite subject. In large windows (and we must remember that the windows in Perpendicular Gothic increased to prodigious proportions) we have tier over tier of these single figures, divided by the transoms, producing a multitudinous and strange impression.

In the waving-shaped openings formed by the stone-work in the upper portions of Decorated windows, figures of angels were very common, or conventional foliage with a border surrounding it. In the same upper parts of Perpendicular lights, the mullions preserving the vertical shape fitted for figures, saints under canopies appear. In these and in the still smaller top openings white glass prevails, and the yellow stain is increasingly used, so much so that yellow is often the prevailing colour. In later specimens the figures are to be seen standing on a bracket. When this is the



case the figure is isolated on a light quarried background which rises to the top without a canopy, but with coloured shields or panels.

In the treatment of figure subjects, a great change takes place towards the end of the period. In Early English and Decorated they were invariably enclosed as medallions too small to be read at a distance, and treated in the mosaic manner, the figures being seen against a dark-coloured ground. During the 1400, pictures appear filling the space from border to border; and towards the end of the century they pass quite across the window, irrespective of the mullions that cut them into so many breadths. By this means the figures are got life-size, and at the same time the splendour of rich broken colour is lost, an emulation of painting with its lights and shadows takes the place of lucid mosaic, and the fundamental principle which ought to guide the decoration of windows is forgotten. This is still further the case in the Tudor age, the greatest licence of pictorial design being then allowed; masses of struggling men and horses in violent action covering the immense field, under pretence of representing the Betrayal or the Crucifixion, in the windows of King's College Chapel at Cambridge, finished about 1531, reputedly designed by Holbein.

Towards the end of the Tudor age we find the foreign ornamentation then dominant invading our glass, as it did everything else, Cinquecento ornament becoming admired. Abroad there are several very fine examples of this taste: I may mention the church of St. Jacques at Liège. Those in other churches in Holland and Flanders of the same time are often much praised as pictures, particularly those at Gauda, but which we must at once admit are necessarily inferior in technical propriety and in religious feeling to the old Gothic glass. The admirers of this period of glass



raise the question whether a window should be made a picture; a question which I have no inclination to argue, but which I would at once answer in the negative. From the end of the sixteenth century white glass stained and painted was alone used; the 'pot-metal,' or glass coloured in fusing, abandoned; and, as the transmission of light was diminished just when more light was wanted, people beginning to carry Bibles and Prayer-books to church, and as the glass-painter competed with the historic and portrait-painter without a chance of success, he ceased to be employed, not only in England, but in other countries also. The revolution in architecture besides conduced to the change; the degenerate Pointed was abandoned, and a sort of Italian classic sprang up without colour, and indeed without ornament. Abroad, it is true, we see churches of this period ornamented, but with stucco enrichments in the most tawdry taste. Churches raised under Jesuit influence are nearly all of this description.

Twenty-five years ago the art was revived, and the mosaic method preserves it in its legitimate sphere in this country. But in Germany, where it arose in connection with the revival in art in Munich under King Ludwig, the picture method prevails. Large masses of figures in dusky toned draperies fill the lower parts of the windows produced at the Royal manufactory, and their whole treatment is opposed to the bright broken colour of mosaic. In England the revival has been a part of the architectural restoration movement, and has been too much a reproduction of old glass with its peculiarities and even absurdities. The distinct separation, however, between the artist, *i.e.* the designer who invents the subject on paper, and the manufacturer who puts the design in the shape of a window, will, it is to be feared, remain. The cartoon by Mr. Dyce

for the east window of Alnwick Church was sent to Munich, under the impression that the English workman or manufacturing superintendent was not equal to the task. The large number of painted windows now placed in Glasgow Cathedral have been lost to English art by ignorant advice; the civic mind being susceptible to the charms of ordering from a royal foreign atelier, they have been executed for the most part in Munich. Many of our English cathedrals also have replaced their blank windows with colour, but without much deliberation. The work has been entrusted to such wholesale manufactories as those at Newcastle-on-Tyne and Birmingham. Some few pieces of lovely work and good art have already been done with us, however; and art of the highest kind, in design as well as in spirit, is not only quite compatible with the mosaic method, but most legitimately united with it. These combined will ultimately prevail, and make the artist in stained glass as high an agent as the architect or the painter.

## LECTURE XIV.

## METHODS OF PAINTING.

## MOSAIC.—TEMPERA.—FRESCO.

IN all things we are bound by the material conditions under which we work, and the greatest intellect can only do what is possible with the means at its command. Where these conditions are explicit, the first business of the artist or ornamentist is to understand them and be limited by them, conformity to them being necessary to good design. The art of painting exhibits a series of changes in method according to the nature of the surface to be painted, regulated by the pigments at command. Walls of stone, or primed with gypsum or lime, were no doubt the earliest field for the painter; afterwards wooden panels, vessels, furniture, and so on; and lastly cloth strained on frames, and prepared as canvas.

Of these different methods Fresco has been considered the most ancient; and, as we find no vehicle but water is required in fresco-painting, we may easily admit it to have been the earliest application of colour for a decorative or artistic purpose. But whether or not the oldest remains still preserved for investigation have been executed in a manner really conforming to the primary condition of fresco is a question which cannot be solved. The fact of this water-painting being done on the lime immediately on

that being laid, so that the colours became amalgamated with it, made fresco-painting a conditional part of the finishing of the building, and no doubt all ancient examples were contemporaneous with the structures. Sir Gardiner Wilkinson, describing the pictures in the Egyptian catacombs, says they are painted either on the bare limestone wall, or on the sandstone prepared with a thin ground of lime. There may have been gum in the ground, and the presumption that the painting was done after the plaster was dry makes it tempera, not fresco. Belzoni in one case found the picture unfinished; the space was squared by lines into equal spaces or degrees, so as to enable an inferior hand to copy the figure on to the wall, a plan still in common use. This first tracing was done in red outline, a more skilful hand correcting it in black. Then the sculptor chiselled the outline into the surface, these Egyptian decorations being in the early examples wrought in shallow relief, or rather in that primitive form to which the term *cavo-rilievo* has been given, as the sculpture does not rise above the level surface, but the bevelled outlines sink below it.

Black, blue, red, green, and yellow were the colours used, and the idea—natural enough, we would not scruple to say in our day—of mixing and blending these pure pigments, so as to produce tints, does not seem to have presented itself to the Egyptian mind, the colours being always used simply, in larger or smaller masses. Yet Belzoni ascribed a marvellous effect to some he saw, calling them the grandest pictures in the world. No small part of this grand impression, however, must have resulted from the imposing novelty of the situation, the enthusiastic traveller being the first for 2000 years to enter these tombs of kings, and again light up the red men in their chariots by the glare of his torch.



The pigments employed in these tomb pictures were very much the same as those still used in fresco; the white was lime, and ochres performed the most conspicuous part, the black was lampblack, and the blues and greens appear to have been prepared from copper. Theophrastus says one of the kings found out how to make the beautiful blue, so precious that princes sent presents of it to each other—a colour conjectured to have been ultramarine, which is quite well adapted for fresco.

In the Etruscan tombs, the paintings were found, as in Egypt, sometimes on the bare sandstone, and more generally on thin, fine plaster. The advantage, says Lady Calcott, of applying colour upon a damp or even wet ground must have been abundantly apparent from the success of the painted vases so early brought to perfection in Greece and Tuscany; and so, in the earliest paintings of any magnitude described in either country, we recognise genuine fresco. A conclusion of the most questionable kind, the very magnitude of the work making the drying of the plaster before completion next to certain. The fresco painter calculates on one day only for the continuance of absorption by the wet lime. The Greeks occasionally mixed milk with the ground in preparing to paint on walls; and, as their smaller pictures were painted on wood, the gypsum priming of fine plaster had, most probably, some binding matter infused into its composition.

The white ground of the mummy-cases, on the contrary, can be rubbed off by moisture even yet, and the coloured figures on them have been lacquered over with a strong glaze, so strong that it appears at this day as if it had just been applied. Where the brush in applying this matter has gone over the edge and covered the white ground may occasionally be seen. To the Greeks, however, and I believe

to the Romans, our varnishes were unknown; they were all discovered from time to time in later years. No glazing coat has been found on the pictures exhumed in Pompeii; but, as Apelles is said to have washed over his finished works with a fluid, we must suppose he had something that answered a purpose similar to our varnish.

Having heard these few particulars of ancient practice in reference to the idea of the antiquity of fresco-painting, you will not be surprised to learn, when we come to our proper subject, painting in modern times, that no middle-age works were so executed, and that fresco only came into use in Italy towards the close of the fourteenth century, previous to which various vehicles were used, all pictures being executed in methods now generally denominated *Tempera*; and that the reign of *Fresco* was only about 150 years between the abandonment of these and the general adoption of oil.

Beginning at our own era, we find painting on the dry wall with adhesive media certainly the practice; but another process, a few centuries afterwards much more highly esteemed, was the art of Mosaic. All through the earlier centuries, mosaic continued to be the most sumptuous art of the Byzantines, both at home and abroad. What the ancient Greeks were to the ancient Romans, the Byzantines were in some sort to Italy and to Europe generally for a considerable period of time—that usually termed the dark ages.

When the iconoclastic movement drove multitudes of intelligent artists and artificers into banishment, the Italians gladly received them. The monastery attached to Sta. Maria in Cosmedin was given up to them, and from that celebrated seminary, or '*Scuola Greca*' as it was called, ready-made artists were furnished to the rest of Europe,

and France, Germany, and England were visited by the refugees. The shrine of Edward the Confessor at Westminster is the solitary piece of mosaic now remaining in this country, or perhaps ever existing: Italy being the only country where its triumphs can yet be seen to any extent.

In 1204 the Venetians, under 'blind old Dandolo,' took Constantinople, and in Venice, in the Church of St. Mark, the earliest mosaics of which are of Greek workmanship, we have the fullest example of the art. Much earlier mosaics than these are, however, to be seen in Ravenna, which city and province, as an exarchate, or province ruled by a delegate or exarch, was the last portion of the West that adhered to the falling empire, and was successively the abode of the last members of the Theodosian family, of several Ostrogoth sovereigns, and of an archbishop, whose power did not for a long time yield to that of Rome. In the cathedral baptistry of Ravenna, and in the chapel of the Empress Galla Placidia, are the most notable mosaics in the world, executed about 430; in Rome also are several of the same early date, and nearly as interesting.

The cupola of the baptistry of Florence is covered by mosaics, an incalculable labour, begun by Apollonius, a Greek, and worked upon by Taddeo and Agnolo Gaddi, Ghirlandajo, Lippo Lippi, and other great artists. These last were among the latest painters who worked with their own hands on mosaic—a common practice from the time of Cimabue, who was employed on a mosaic when he died in 1301.

The method of working mosaic, the picture being produced by small squares of coloured marble or glass imbedded in lime, precluded it from ever becoming a rival of painting in the representation of natural objects. It remained always



archaic,\* and this very character gives it now additional interest, while, the material being liable to little change, it has preserved to us many things that would have been long gone had they been embodied by any other method.

Tempera, however, is very permanent; it has had the longest trial, and nothing is more certain than the fact that many of the earliest pictures in Italy are better preserved than the majority of later works. In tempera, gums of various kinds, glue or size made from parchment, or even flour paste, were all used. Cennino Cennini, who wrote a treatise on painting about the end of the fourteenth century, professes to give the exact method of Giotto. Egg beaten up with water seems to have been preferred by him, except where the yellowness of the mixture injured the purity of the colour. Oil or albumen was used to go over the surface afterwards, and, as far as my limited means of observation enable me to speak, I conceive it is very difficult at this distance of time to say which are in tempera, and which fresco or even oil, among the early wall-pictures in Italy. The surfaces of all of them are equally hard and smooth; but the true fresco may unhappily be most frequently distinguished by its dilapidation, the plaster having at first been put on piecemeal, and the last coating, the *intonaco*, of fine and white lime, on which the artist has to work, being added at his convenience, and irrespectively of the condition of the wall below.

If fresco has its attendant evils in a southern climate, how much are they increased in northern countries! In Munich the out-of-door frescoes done about thirty-five years ago are falling to pieces, and in our New Houses of Parliament,

\* That is to say, original designs in mosaic were nearly always archaic; in later times the art was employed to copy pictures.



where the process has been upon its trial, a lamentable failure has been the result. Some of the artists employed, however, are wholly wanting in the sureness of hand and precision of the 'inspired workmen,' as the great masters have been called, their execution on easel pictures even being painfully uncertain and laborious.

When the painting of pictures in the 'New Palace at Westminster' was first proposed, several leading artists of France and Germany were consulted, and a mass of useful information on the subject of fresco and other methods was collected by Sir Charles Eastlake. Cornelius, one of the first movers in the great revival development in Bavaria under the late King Ludwig, being attached to the pre-Raphael sentiment as well as practice, advised the adoption of fresco. Paul Delaroche, one of the most vigorous artists of France, looking simply to the best means of artistic expression, advocated oil on the wall as well as on cloth. The reflecting surface of oil is one of its most objectionable qualities, but this may be avoided by the ground being made absorbent. In his own practice, however, oil on walls has not turned out wholly successful, his noble picture of the assembly of artists, in the hemicycle of the *École des Beaux Arts*, having it is said peeled off in several places and required retouching. Cornelius's immense picture of the 'Last Judgment,' which covers the east wall of the *Ludwigs-kirche* in Munich, has the advantage of it in this respect, presenting an uniform and perfect surface full of light and clear, though German, colour. If the wall is not properly dried, or if from any other cause the painted surface forms itself into a skin separable from the lime, destruction is sure and rapid, of oil-painting as well as fresco. The saddest evidence of this is afforded by Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper,' in the dilapidated hall once the refectory of Sta.

Maria delle Grazie, in Milan, since used as a stable or a barrack.

Much has been written about the decay of this painting. Those who see it after reading the worst accounts of it will be agreeably disappointed; it is still lovely and noble, and the head of our Lord and those of several of the apostles are still unspeakably superior to any copy or engraving. When I visited it, men were cleaning off the whitewash from the upper parts of the side walls and revealing their old fresco decorations. But the decay of the Cenacolo hardly affords a fair criterion whereby to determine the durability of oil for wall-painting. In the first place, Da Vinci was sixteen years engaged on this work, beginning it in 1493, and must in that time have repainted much. Now a picture much repainted at intervals and drying unequally has a less chance to remain uniform and intact even on canvas than one executed at once: \* on the plaster wall perhaps he had to prime the ground afresh. Then the materials with which the wall was built were of a bad quality, rendering it susceptible of injury from damp; and, the situation being low, the apartment, even in 1500 while he was still employed on the work, was flooded in rainy seasons. And lastly, so little respect was paid to the art by the possessors of the hall, as in many other instances involving the ruin of great historic monuments of painting in Italy, that the monks, wishing to enlarge a door below the picture, cut away the feet of our Lord and the neighbouring figures, and with their pickaxes shook the wall. Altogether nothing but a miracle could have saved it entire. If we compare the wall-paintings by Giotto, those in the Arena chapel in Padua especially, with later works either in fresco or oil, we should say

\* A sketch done in a day rarely changes at all,

that the method pursued by him is the most permanent of all. But happily this chapel has scarcely ever been used.

Tempera-painting is not now sufficiently estimated as a method adapted to elaborate subjects of an elevated character. The scene-painter has full possession of it, and he has brought it to great perfection, the truth of imitation in some of our best theatrical scenery and panoramic pictures being absolutely startling. It was in this way that the less accomplished but higher-thinking Byzantine and Gothic artist worked, whether on his illuminated page or chancel-wall. Until Giotto's time the vehicle was used very thick, and the paint laid on with a small brush. That great master painted in a broader style, thinning his colours with egg in water and the milky juice of young shoots of the fig-tree—an excellent medium, not easily affected afterwards either by water or oil.\*

For interior decorative purposes tempera painting is still in general use in Italy. The English traveller bound

\* No mention has yet been made of encaustic painting, though an early method. In it wax was the medium, and heat was applied to fuse the colours and penetrate the plaster when the work was done. As perfect specimens of old encaustic are scarcely known to exist, it is not necessary to dilate on the method, but we ought to mention that a solution of wax in turpentine has of late been adopted with great success. In restoring the oil-paintings on the cupola of St. Paul's, which had become nearly black, this vehicle was adopted, and several artists have since tried it with excellent effect; the author himself having found it transparent and bright in effect; dull like water-colour and reflective of light, not absorbent of it and gloomy like oil-painting, and apparently imperishable, except indeed where damp, the invincible enemy to all soundness of surface, may exist in the wall. The work on which it has been used by him is a series of poetic pictures from the old poem called the 'King's Quair,' on the staircase of Penkill, Ayrshire.

for the south soon discovers in the hotels and elsewhere a great change from the interiors he has left at home, where public rooms are often bare, and private apartments invariably papered or flat. He begins to find ceiling and wall gaily bordered and panelled, and when fairly in Lombardy he finds every house has more or less hand-painting, often very bad, but always conveying an amusing and gay sense of colour and design. Even the exteriors are often painted; and in Genoa, especially, where the debased taste of the present Italians seems to have blossomed into the richest vulgarity, it is difficult to tell what is real and what paint in the pilasters, mouldings, and other architectural members. Even open windows with green jalousies thrown back and people looking out, fine ladies and gentlemen of course, are imitated on blind gables. Yet, even in this degraded style of decoration, one discerns traits of redeeming fancy. Not only do we see ivy painted on new walls, but against high white campaniles or chimneys I have noticed swallows painted flying about. These and other vagaries please one for a moment, willing to give fancy its full praise.

These interior decorations are often very skilful in manipulation and very rich in effect, though entirely wrong in principle. Making an allowance for intellectual difference, many of the extensive inferior works of the old schools of painting in Italy were executed in the same rough-and-ready manner. Time brings respect to whatever is worthy of it; it also brings a new value altogether irrespective of the original estimate. Distance also enhances our admiration. What we go far to see we admire. The Italian—priest, citizen, or peasant—cares nothing for the national treasures, fresco or tempera; he does not examine which they are; he lets them drop



off the wall. A few years ago Mr. (now Barone) Kirkup,\* after infinite trouble and opposition, got the whitewash removed from the wall of the Bargello which Giotto was reputed to have painted, and brought to light the youthful portrait of the greatest Italian poet by one of the greatest artists of the world. This precious relic—precious for so many reasons—reclaimed for them, might, one would have thought, have been preserved sacredly and valued above treasure by the Florentines, wreck as it was. But instead of that they repainted it!

When fresco came into use, tempera became the practice of inferior men. Certainty of hand was always considered the first artistic requisite; even mechanical correctness was valued by Giotto as much as, or, one would say, more than, the high qualities we now recognise in his works with so much veneration. There is a story, which indeed passed into a proverb, illustrative of this. On Giotto's being asked by the messenger of the Pope to send a specimen of his ability, he did not commit to the man's care one of his highly-finished tablets, or commend him to the church of Assisi, but he made a circle without lifting his hand in its completion, and gave it as an evidence of his powers: 'round as Giotto's O' became afterwards a popular idiom.

This certainty and celerity were still more necessary in fresco, which is quick, workmanlike—seen from a distance, architectural; it would be injured by depth of chiaro-scuro, and much detail would be lost upon it. Its good qualities are nobler than the technicalities of oil-painting, or than

\* Signor G. Bezzi, in a letter in the 'Athenæum,' May 5, 1860, claims the honour of this recovery of the picture by Giotto in the Bargello.

those of a high refinement. Simplicity and breadth, natural action, purity and truth of character, harmony—if the fresco-painter has not these, he has little to disguise the want of them. When fresco was entirely supplanted by oil at a later time, this elevated nobility of character gave place to a decorative and artificial style: it was foreseeing this decline that made Michelangelo pronounce that sentence on oil-painting so often repeated and misrepresented. Sebastian del Piombo persuaded Pope Paul III. to direct Michelangelo to paint the 'Last Judgment' in oil. Michelangelo had undertaken the painting to be done in fresco, and was silent at first on hearing the change proposed; the wall was prepared for oil-painting, under the direction of Fra Sebastian. 'Michelangelo suffered several months to pass without beginning, and, being at last pressed to proceed to the work, he declared that he would not undertake it unless he were allowed to execute it in fresco, adding that oil-painting was an art for women, and for persons in easy circumstances and of indolent habits like Fra Sebastian. The Frate's priming was therefore removed and the surface prepared anew for fresco.' Such is the account of the incident given by Vasari.

By a close inspection of many of the works of the masters of fresco, we might come to a close acquaintance with their habits while engaged thereon, the lines made by the tracing point and the divisions of the plaster showing the boundaries of their daily labour. Accidents apart, we should find how speedily they went over the gigantic areas that strike us with astonishment at Padua, Pisa, and elsewhere. We should also find from the narrow range of colours, but much more from the necessity of describing the outline by indentation on the soft material, and the cutting out of the useless plaster round the portion done, that fresco is a rude

as well as a noble method of art, and that it is more inspired than elaborated, and essentially expressing rather ideas and conceptions than transcripts from nature, the model being of little use. When my brother had a scaffold erected to study and copy some parts of the 'Last Judgment' in the Capella Sistina, and found himself on a level with the upper part of the wide surface, he saw that the incised lines of the tracing were deep, and without care, as we would say; and he remarks in his journal that no labour has been expended nor attempt made to overcome incongruities in design and proportion, &c., that so torment a modern, and cause him to weaken the force of his treatment.

To understand these remarks thoroughly, it is requisite that you know the procedure in fresco-painting. This has been so often described in a brief way, the only way possible here, that I merely add the following explanation in the fear that it may be absolutely necessary.

Fresco is so called from the colour being applied to the *fresh* wet surface of lime. The first thing to be done is to prepare the lime, which must be of the finest and whitest description, carbonate of lime, with as little admixture of other matter as possible. If the lime be too new, it is liable both to destroy the colours and to blister; its causticity must therefore be reduced by keeping it slacked and exposed to the air. The length of time necessary to fit it for the artist's purpose may depend on the weather, but half a year may be considered enough; and, if it be then buried and preserved as a paste for a while, so much the better. The preparing of the lime, indeed, is one of those practical matters in which nothing but actual experience is of any use, and for which different rules would infallibly be given by different practitioners. Cornelius kept the lime eight years for the paintings in the Ludwigskirche. I believe it is



generally considered all the better for long keeping, and first applied on the rough wall with a mixture of two parts of sand, fine and white, as the old Italians did. This is allowed to dry, and then, a finer and whiter preparation being ready, the artist, with his assistant the plasterer, proceeds to paint.

Previous to doing so, however, a drawing must have been prepared as complete as may be practicable according to the habits of the painter; and the more perfect the better, in the essential of form particularly. This drawing, the same size as the intended picture, must be ready to be transferred piecemeal on the wall; the plasterer is then directed to lay as much space as the painter expects to cover during the day. When the *intonaco*, as the fine lime surface is called, is smoothed to his liking, with either a wooden trowel or a flat brush, he traces a portion from his design against the soft surface with a style that leaves the outlines slightly incised, and so rendered visible for the application of the colour. The quarter of an hour occupied by this process has made the lime exactly ready, and no time is now to be lost, as the portion undertaken must be finished during the day, and without too much retouching, as the *intonaco* can only absorb a certain quantity of the pure water he employs as a vehicle. If absorption ceases by the lime setting too soon or too much water being applied, the colour ceases to sink into and amalgamate with the body of the lime: it remains on the surface, and crumbles off at last. His day's work being over, he carefully cuts away the surface he may not have covered, leaving the old dry plaster exactly round the outline of his finished work, be it a profile or any other contour. And so he goes on day by day, piece by piece, till the whole is done.

The colours used in fresco are earths. Animal and vegetable substances are decomposed at once, and few



minerals can be applied with safety. The white is simply lime refined by repeated trituration, washing, and sifting. The yellows are numerous, ochres and Siena earth, and the reds are these burnt; burnt vitriol serves for lake. Vermilion has been used, but is not safe, nor are chrome and other bright pigments artists have been deluded into trying. Umber in its various preparations, Cologne earth burnt black, terra-vert, chrome-green, and others, ultramarine blue, real or imitative, and cobalt, are all at his service—a limited palette, you will observe, compared with that of the oil-painter, and infinitely more uncertain, the ultimate effect being only apparent after a day or two, when all the tints have dried several degrees lighter, and when it is too late to attempt to alter, except by applying the hammer and beginning again with the plasterer's trowel.

These few sentences explanatory of the process will assist in convincing you how different fresco ought to be in its spirit, as well as in its procedure, from the later and more perfect oil method. It must deal largely and plainly with a historical, religious, or other lofty motive in the realisation of which still-life imitation and perfect relief are of little importance. In the Campo Santo or in the Arena chapel, singleness of aim, simplicity of execution, and the absence of small things, make one feel stronger and breathe freer than in a modern exhibition. We understand at once, too, in the presence of these and other similar works, how it was their painters did so much. They had the entire wall to cover, a whole history to write with the brush: the great triumph was not to get the details perfect, but to make the whole complete.

There are three places, great landmarks in the history of fresco and of tempera, which have been already repeatedly mentioned, but which I may describe a little at length.

These are the Sistine chapel in the Vatican, the Arena chapel in Padua, and the Campo Santo of Pisa. Other places might be mentioned, in the opinion of some of equal importance—the Loggie and Stanze, i.e. the corridors and four rooms in the Vatican, painted by Raphael, may have been more influential; but the first two, as contrasting examples of two periods and men—and these men, Michelangelo and Giotto, are most to my purpose—and the third, as very important in the fourteenth century of the history of art, may be classed with them.

The cemetery first called by the name of Campo Santo was founded in Pisa by the Archbishop Ubaldo about 1190, on his retreat from Palestine, whence he returned with his fifty-three vessels laden with earth from Calvary. This earth was laid down and an arcade or cloister built round it, 415 feet in length by 137 wide. This entire space is covered by the tempera and fresco works of the early Tuscan school, beginning from the time of Giotto, who was rising into good name when the building was nearly finished in 1310.

There are few places in the world likely to make a deeper impression on the traveller than the Campo Santo of Pisa. In visiting it he winds through the thinly inhabited streets of that old city, and, as he approaches the suburbs and leaves the town behind, he comes upon the immense pile of the white marble cathedral, beside it the white marble Baptistery, and over against it the Leaning Tower, also of white marble; all these noble buildings seem one stupendous design, and the interminable outer wall of the Campo Santo forms a level background skirting the expanse of pavement, which perhaps is unmarked by a single human creature.

You enter the cloister from the chapel on the west side,

and find the most ancient of this series of early works on your left, the 'Passion,' 'Resurrection,' 'Appearance to the Disciples,' and 'Ascension,' by an unknown artist. These are very much decayed and fallen from the walls, as also are those from the Book of Job, to which we shall recur; open to the air and near the sea, we must expect five centuries or more to leave a fatal impression, but the portions remaining are bright, and other works, contemporary or nearly so, are still tolerably preserved, so that here as elsewhere we may say violence and carelessness are greater enemies of painting than time itself. Some portions of the Job pictures have been destroyed to make way for somebody's expansive tomb.

Passing on we come to a series by Andrea Orcagna, who died in 1389, pictures of immense area, full of imagination of the most astounding power and quaintness. The first of these is the 'Triumph of Death.' Under an orange-grove, among the boughs of which cupids are flying, sit ladies and cavaliers gorgeously attired, listening to a dulcimer and viol. Down upon them descends, on great bat's wings, a fearful-looking woman, with streaming hair, claws on her fingers, and indestructible wire-woven drapery—the genius of Death. Under her lies a mass of corpses from some of whose mouths abominable fiends draw the little shrinking souls. These fly all over the upper part of that side of the picture, where they are met by angels who fight for the denuded souls or carry off others happily in their arms. Passing to the opposite extremity of the picture, we find a fresh treatment of the subject. A splendid train of princes and dames have been hunting with falcons and dogs, when suddenly they emerge from a hollow and see before them three open graves with the bodies exposed in hideous decay. The upper part of this side shows us the hermits of the wilderness living a sober and saving life.



All this invention is placed upon the wall with infinite *naïveté*, as if it represented simple facts; and every individual figure is full of action and character. Next to this is the 'Last Judgment,' in which Hell appears. This I have not time to describe, nor indeed any others on this part of the wall. The histories of certain saints succeed, by Spinello of Arezzo, and these are followed by the history of Job, ascribed by Vasari to Giotto, but by Kugler to Francesco da Volterra, who painted here in the years 1370-72. In this series we see Christ as Jehovah giving audience to Satan, which is followed by the trials of the patriarch, treated like incidents of the painter's time.

Passing to the north side we find the entire wall of 400 feet in length covered by the labours of one artist, Benozzo Gozzoli, the scholar of Fra Angelico da Fiesole and a painter of endless invention, treating the history of Noah, the Building of Babel, the Life of Solomon, &c., in the costume of his own day, and giving for some personages the portraits of his friends. Those executed between 1469 and 1485 are the best preserved of all the works in the Campo Santo, and show an advanced style of design and drawing, altogether different from those by Orcagna. Between the earliest and the latest of all these works nearly a century and a half has elapsed; and we have the means here of judging how great the advance was, and in what it consisted, immediately before the period when the simultaneous appearance of so many great men brought the art to its meridian.

The Arena chapel belongs to an earlier time, having been the work of Giotto's youth, who built it in 1303 and immediately began the painting. The building is a simple parallelogram, and each side is divided into three rows of pictures, representing, in thirty-eight pictures, the history of the Virgin and of our Lord, beginning with the apo-



cryphal incidents connected with the Virgin's parentage : above the entrance is the 'Last Judgment,' and opposite, above the arch of the choir, is the Saviour in a glory of angels. The roof is mostly blue powdered with stars, the backgrounds of the pictures are for the main part the same colour, the gold grounds of the Byzantine time being abandoned for simple perspectives, or more generally for a sky-blue. Here it is, of all places in the world, we feel the charm of pure feeling and noble treatment. Five colours, with black and white, might produce all the variety we see ; no cast shadows appear, and the round forms are but partially shaded : it seems as if all the scenes passed in a clear truth-telling atmosphere, in mysterious harmony with the sacred subjects ; the Virgin presenting the Infant Christ in the Temple, all the 'Joys' and the 'Sorrows,' ending with the Ascension, and the Descent of the Spirit, the Comforter, who will be with the elect till the end of the world.

The third of our selected shrines, the Sistine chapel, so called from the name of its founder Sixtus IV., 1473, is the ceremonial chapel of the Vatican. In length it is 150 feet by 50 wide, and all along this length it is covered on each side, on the upper part of the wall, by pictures which, were it not for Michelangelo on the roof and on the unbroken east end, would receive much more attention than they do, being by Perugino, Signorelli, Ghirlandajo, Sandro Botticelli, and others. These pictures were carried round and over the altar ; three works by Perugino, formerly on the east end—'Moses in the Bulrushes,' 'Christ in the Manger,' and the 'Assumption of the Virgin,' which occupied the centre—being destroyed to make way for the 'Last Judgment,' about sixty years after their completion, and thirty after Michelangelo's first labour in this place, when

he illuminated the roof with his greatest works. In his vigorous middle life, 1508, the roof occupied him twenty months; the 'Dies Iræ,' which is only 47 by 43 feet in size, took nearly seven years of his advanced age, being finished in 1541, when the painter was 67. The greater masters, especially in the later times then beginning, had many assistants; but not so Michelangelo, whose sternness of temper and contempt for all weakness of intellect or of hand, perhaps his most predominant feeling, made him a lonely man in his life and in his art.

Of the grandeur of style of these works of Michelangelo, of their scholastic power, and predominance of the intellectual, which almost separates them from what critics designate 'Christian' art, I shall not venture to speak, at least I will not do so here, but rather point out the greater comprehensiveness of the scheme described by the pictures.

On the entrance wall the great painter had intended to represent the 'Fall of Lucifer.' This was never done, although some of the drawings were made for it; but the subject is necessary to commence the cycle which is followed by the 'Creation of the World and of Man.' In the centre of the roof is the 'Creation of Eve,' not important in the size of the picture, because the subject in itself is less than others round it, but eminently important in its position, because of the prophecy that the seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent. The 'Fall,' the 'Expulsion,' the 'Deluge,' follow, supported at the angles by four Old Testament types of the Redemption and the Overcoming of Satan—the Brazen Serpent, and the Deaths of the Giant Goliath, of Haman, and of Holophernes. Supporting and surrounding the roof, are the Prophets who foretold or symbolised our Lord's coming, and the Sibyls who were

early enrolled by the Church as prophetic witnesses to the truth.

The two long lines of pictures by earlier masters, already mentioned, then took up the mighty tale, exhibiting the establishment of the old law in the history of Moses, and the redemption of the world by the death and resurrection of the Saviour. Last of all, on the great east wall, came the 'Day of Judgment,' the graves giving up their dead, the redeemed ascending, and the condemned falling into the eternal night.

The three great groups of pictures presented to us in these three sacred buildings may very well represent the entire period within which fresco painting existed. The Arena chapel (tempera) and the Campo Santo (both tempera and fresco) represent the Purism of the Trecentisti, the artists living in the 1300, with their immediate successors, advancing step by step; the Sistine (fresco) giving us the scholastic and the intellectual, the noblest manifestation of that condition of art which quickly degenerated into machinery and technicality.

## LECTURE XV.

## OIL PAINTING.

## ORIGIN AND PRACTICE.

THE most important improvement in the modern history of the arts is the introduction of oil as a vehicle in painting. This simple mechanical change in the method of applying the colours has led to great changes in the execution, in the application, and in a great measure in the spirit, of the art.

Great as was the result of the new method said to have been invented in Flanders, important as it was to the artists immediately following the date of the discovery, we have no distinct account of what constituted it. Nor is it certain which of the two Van Eycks was the first or the principal experimentalist who was so fortunate as to render easy the improvement, whatever it was. The more the matter is investigated, the more certain it seems that oil was much used in painting, ages before this period, in various countries. Besides, many of the pictures by the Van Eycks, Memling, and others, immediately on the adoption of the improved medium, retain all the perfection of newly-painted surfaces. The one in the National Gallery, for instance, inscribed 'Johannes de Eyck fuit hic, 1434,' an inscription not very intelligible, painted four centuries and a quarter ago, has neither speck, stain, nor crack, to injure its enamel, nor has there been any change, as



in nearly all pictures painted in later times, turning white into yellow, and darkening the general surface. This remarkable circumstance has led many to fancy the first fortunate innovators had some means of preparing the oil, or some other ingredient altogether, not generally communicated or continued to after years, but which in an essential degree constituted the invention.

This idea has been a fruitful source of mischief, many artists having tried experiments to the speedy decay of their works. Sir Joshua Reynolds, more than all others, unhappily sought about for the lost secret, mixing elements destructive of each other, and ruinous to the entire picture on which he ventured them.

The principal treatises on painting in the middle ages are—that by Theophilus the monk, repeatedly already referred to, who was first thought to belong to about 1000, but who is now said to have lived in the end of the 1100; some treatises of less note of various later dates translated by Mrs. Merrifield, and published in one volume by her; a treatise by Cennino Cennini, written about 1300; and the remarkable Greek MS. brought from Mount Athos by M. Didron, and translated by Paul Durand, the artist who accompanied him. In all of these oil is mentioned as a vehicle, but with certain conditions or apparent restrictions. A manuscript in the Imperial Library of Paris, by Peter de St. Audemar, describes how colours are to be prepared. White lead is to be ground with wine for illuminating on parchment, with oil for painting on panels or walls. Green, blue, red (minium), black, are all to be ground with oil for painting on wood, but with gum-water or egg for walls. It is much the same in other documents of the same period. Theophilus recommends all colours to be ground with oil for painting on movable panels or painted doors, because

they can be *dried in the sun*, a custom which shows the oil used was defective in drying properties, and which led afterwards to Van Eyck's discovery, as we shall see.

In our own country we find by many entries in records, relating to the Painted Chamber in Westminster and elsewhere, that oil was used in large quantities. In 1274 to 1277, 'To Raymund for 17lb. of white lead ii.s. x.d. For 16 gallons of oil xvi.s. For 24lbs. of varnish xii.s.' 'To Hugo de Vespunt for 18 gallons of oil xxi.s.' And elsewhere, 'To Robert King for one cart-load of charcoal for drying the painting in the King's Chamber iii.s. viii.d.,' again showing the necessity for artificial means of drying. There are also accounts relating to repairs in the Painted Chamber wherein oil appears; yet the remains of the pictures, when examined in 1819, easily yielded to the sponge. In many other records regarding paintings in churches and other buildings in England, the oil is expressly called 'painter's oil.'

Whether these accounts relate exclusively to the grounds prepared for the pictures, and to the covering of flat surfaces, there is no evidence; but a similar document found at Königsberg relates to the door of a diptych, 'painted in oil colours,' to be paid by 9 firdunge, about 1*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.* 'This price,' says Sir Charles Eastlake, 'indicates a work of no very refined art, yet not of the commonest kind.' The date of the accounts in which this note appears extends from 1399 to 1409, just when Hubert Van Eyck may be supposed to have experimented.

You will observe that varnish is mentioned in one of these accounts, and that its quantity is described by weight, and not by measure, being dry sandarac resin, which was boiled with oil, and used as we use varnish, being applied to surfaces painted not only in oil but also in tempera.

Observe also that these, and many other notices of the use of oil that might be quoted, pertain to northern latitudes; in Italy fresco was comparatively a new art; and tempera, although much hampered by the necessity to *hatch* the colour, was making great advances. 'The latter half of the fourteenth century had already been marked by innovations in technical habits. Within that period may be placed the beginning of fresco properly so called, and the end of wax painting.' 'Another and more important change,' continues Sir Charles Eastlake, 'was at hand. Soon after the first ten years of the fifteenth century, oil-painting was not only rendered practical, but carried to perfection. The art, recommended as it was at the same time by new and surprising efforts in imitation, could not fail to attract attention. \* \* \* The earliest known writers who eulogised the Flemish artist were Italians; and it is not surprising that the previous imperfect attempts at oil-painting should have been overlooked.' Labarte speaks more slightly of the claim of the Van Eycks. He says: 'That the invention of oil-painting should have been attributed to Van Eyck is owing to Vasari, who asserts, in the first edition of his "Lives," that the great master of Bruges, Giovanni da Bruggia, was the author of the important discovery, although more than 100 years had elapsed since his death, without any document having ever been published attributing to him the invention. Scarcely had Vasari's work appeared when the Flemish and Dutch writers hastened to avail themselves of the statement. \* \* \* What Van Eyck probably did was to improve on the old methods, and discover oils that would dry without being exposed to the sun.'

Yet the artists of Italy did not at once embrace the novelty, the first oil-pictures of which we have any account



beyond the Alps being executed between 1455 and 1460, although Vasari says that the new method was what all the painters of the world had sought for, and which once found was everywhere adopted. So late as the date of Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the 'Last Supper,' 1497, we find Paul Lomazzo describing his practice as 'in the manner first found out by John of Bruges,' as if it were then just beginning to be known.\* This delay is, however, partly explained by the secrecy under which it was attempted to be kept, at least in Florence, whither the practice was carried by Domenico, and little understood even after his time.

Now let us take the narrative of the historian of Painters. It occurs in his 'Life of Antonello da Messina,' who carried the knowledge of the novelty back to his native Italy, from Flanders, whither he had repaired to learn the method from Van Eyck.

After describing the modes prior to the time in question, Vasari tells us that many tried to find a better, but that their attempts had failed. 'These matters were often the subject of fruitless discussion when artists met together, and the same object was proposed by many eminent painters in other countries besides Italy—in France, Spain, Germany, and elsewhere. While things were in this state, it happened that John of Bruges, pursuing the art in Flanders, and much esteemed in those parts for his great skill, set himself to try different colours; and, being a man who delighted in alchemy, he laboured much in the preparation of various oils for varnishes and other things, as is the manner of men of inventive minds, such as he was. Now it happened

\* 'Leonardo ha colorito quasi tutte l'opere sue ad oglio, la qual maniera di colorire fu ritrovata prima da Gio. da Bruggia, essendo certa cosa che gli antichi non la conobbero.' Quoted by Mr. Hendrie, in the Preface to his Translation of Theophilus.



upon a time that after having given extreme labour to the completion of a certain picture, and with great diligence brought it to a successful issue, he gave it the varnish and set it to dry in the sun, as is the custom. But whether the heat was too violent, or that the wood was badly joined or insufficiently seasoned, the picture gave way at the joinings, opening in a very deplorable manner. Thereupon, John, perceiving the mischief done to his work, determined to proceed in future so that the same thing should never again injure his work in like manner. And, as he was embarrassed both by his varnishes and by the process of tempera-painting, he turned his thoughts to the discovery of some material that would dry in the shadow, to the end that he need not expose his pictures to the heat of the sun. Accordingly, after having made many experiments on substances, pure and mixed, he finally discovered that linseed oil and oil of nuts dried more readily than any others of all he had tried. Having boiled these oils therefore, with other mixtures, he thus obtained the medium which he, or rather all the painters of the world, had so long desired. He made experiments with many other substances, but finally decided that mixing the colours with these oils gave a degree of firmness to the work which not only secured it against all injury from water when once dried, but also imparted so much life to the colours that they exhibited a sufficient lustre in themselves without the aid of varnish : and what appeared more extraordinary to him than all beside was that the colours thus treated were much more easily united and blent than when in tempera. Rejoicing greatly over this invention, as it was reasonable he should do, John then commenced a multitude of paintings with which he filled all those parts, to the great delight of all who beheld them, as well as with very large gain to himself ;

his experience increasing from day to day, and his pictures constantly attaining to a higher degree of perfection.'

Such is the best account, and the earliest, of the most remarkable incident in the technical history of art. Yet the merit of the invention is attributed to John Van Eyck, and no mention is made of his brother Hubert, his elder by about thirty years, who, one would say, must have been the inventor, as he undoubtedly began the large oil-picture of the 'Adoration of the Lamb' in Ghent; and we know that there is an oil-picture at Frankfort, dated 1417, by Peter Christophsen, a scholar of Hubert, who must have derived his knowledge from his previous tutelage, when John would be little more than a boy. Van Mander fixes the discovery of the new method about 1410, when John was about fifteen. There is an inscription on the 'Adoration of the Lamb,' giving all the praise of its execution to Hubert, not to John.\* However, which of the brothers it was mattered little to them, although much to us. There were no patents in those days, and they were men who may be well supposed to have known themselves and their worth, who must have lived a genuine artistic life, applying science when it was necessary, and treating the religious subjects

\* Pictor Hubertus e Eyck, major quo nemo repertus,  
Incepit; pondusque Johannes, arte secundus,  
Suscepit letus, Judoci Vyd prece fretus.  
VersU seXta MaI Vos CoLLoCat aCta tUerI.

This is the inscription; the last line, which would otherwise read simply 'Versu sexta Mai vos collocat acta tueri,' being a conceit called a chronogram, indicating the date by addition of the capital letters (1432). 'Cette inscription barbare,' says M. Michiels in 'Les Peintres Brugeois,' 'contient aussi un pieux hommage rendu par Jean à la mémoire de son frère.' Mr. Wornum, in his 'Epochs of Art,' repudiates this mode of invalidating the import of this inscription by treating it as a mere compliment.

of their time with undoubting faith, and noble earnestness. Hubert, the elder, the maiden sister Margaret, herself an excellent artist, and John, the young brother, who survived and reaped the fruits of genius, form a beautiful scene to the imagination; working together in the rich old city of Bruges, where every house is so distinctly individual, and quaintly decorated, under the sound of those delightful *carillons* that so touch the soul of the traveller. 'It is sweet to think of them,' says M. Michiels, 'as a group in a bright autumn day of the old time, a group pious and meditative and domestic, which explains as at a glance the home-speaking poetry that we detect in the works of the epoch.'

Hubert died in 1426, and the bones of his right arm and hand were preserved and exhibited in an armoire of iron in the porch of the church in which he was buried, as the bones of saints are for veneration; an additional argument for his claims to the invention, as there would appear to have been some especial reason for this extraordinary respect, and that those bones had really belonged to the good right hand which had prepared the way for the excellence and fame of the greatest artists. Over his grave was an epitaph in Flemish verse, carved on a shield held by a marble skeleton, which may be paraphrased as follows:—

Whoe'er thou art who walkest overhead,  
Behold thyself in stone; for I yestreen  
Was seemly and alert like thee; now dead,  
Nailed up, and earthed, and for the last time green,—  
The first spring greenness, and the last decay—  
I am hid here for ever from the day.  
I, Hubert Van Eyck, whom all Bruges folk hailed  
Worthy of lauds, am now with worms engrailed.



My soul with many pains, by God constrained,  
Fled in September, when the corn is wained,  
Just fourteen hundred years and twenty-six  
Since our Lord Christ was made the Crucifix.  
Lovers of Art, pray for me, that I gain  
God's grace, nor find I've painted, lived, in vain.

When the fame of Van Eyck's new practice reached Italy, all the artists were most desirous to know how his pictures were done. Antonello da Messina repaired to Flanders, and, returning to Venice initiated in the mystery, imparted the same to a certain Maestro Domenico, then practising with repute. Antonello dying shortly after, Domenico became the sole depositary of the secret, using it with immense success. In a short time he was called to Florence to exercise his skill, and became acquainted with Andrea del Castagno, a notable artist, of whom Vasari has propagated a terrible story, no less than his murder of Domenico. This narrative has been repeated in histories of painting until lately, when documentary evidence has been discovered which invalidates it. Domenico outlived Castagno; but another Domenico, a painter, was at that time murdered, it is now uncertain by whom.

North of the Alps true fresco never penetrated, nor was painting of any other kind much used to cover walls, so that oil-painting was a great boon to both Flemings and Germans. In Italy it was soon triumphant also, especially in the north; but tempera on panels continued the practice for some time, and fresco unhappily employed Giorgione, among others, to such an extent that we have now very little from his hand.

Nowadays all his materials are provided for the artist; he is ignorant of their manufacture. The palette is his indispensable utensil, the canvas almost his only ground-



work, brushes of various kinds are in his hands, and an immense number of colours, permanent or otherwise, with dryers and other poisons if he likes them. In the old times it was different; many of his appliances he got made for himself, others he prepared with his own hands.

Perhaps the only technical process which has survived without change from remote antiquity is the method of preparing the ground, whether on wood or on other material. As long as wood was exclusively used this remained the same, being a layer of washed chalk (whitening) or plaster of Paris. But, as the ground formed by these becomes brittle with age, it is fittest for an inflexible surface; and the Venetians, who adopted oil with entire devotion, and were the first who preferred canvas, took the precaution of spreading the composition of chalk very thinly, so that their pictures could be rolled without cracking. Van Eyck used wood only, and the later Flemish masters continued to prefer it, especially for small works.

In other parts of Italy wood still continued to be used some time; and in large works necessarily composed of many pieces it may be often remarked that each separate plank has become slightly convex in front, even when the wood is very thick, as in the 'Transfiguration' of Raphael, his last picture, the wood of which is four inches thick, and consists of five planks. It is a mistake to attribute this convexity to the heat of candles burning before pictures on altars; heat would produce rather the opposite effect. The front being protected by the paint, this warping is caused from behind. Not that anyone so using candles ever gave the matter a thought, or adopted any precautions to preserve the great works accidentally committed to his hands, strange as it may seem to us who respect them so much; but the truth is, the Italian clergy do not dis-

tinguish the good from the bad—the most popular and attractive are the best pictures to them. Now, in some instances, they are taken out of their keeping. If you wish to copy the Masaccio frescoes in the Brancacci chapel, application must be made to the Academy.

The small Van Eyck in the National Gallery is protected on the back by chalk, size, and tow, with a thick coat of black oil-paint over all, which has preserved it quite flat. On the other hand, pictures on cloth are also liable to injury from behind, if thinly painted especially. Air, damp, and even dust, attack them; and old pictures have been observed to show where the bars of the stretching frames have protected the front by its greater freshness—the difference in the brightness of the colours being clearly marked, corresponding exactly to the form of the wood-work. At the present day some painters use double cloth; but perhaps as good a plan is to cover the back of the canvas with a thick coat of paint.

After the ground was laid 'as white as milk and as smooth as ivory,' says Cennini, the design was traced upon it with a brownish ink, and shaded like a drawing. Several pictures accidentally arrested in this stage of progress, may still be seen, by Giovanni Bellini, Da Vinci, and others. This drawing in brown was then washed over by a thin oil-priming, and the painting begun. The practice of making a drawing in brown degenerated afterwards in late times into a custom of rubbing the light and shadow of the picture coarsely in, and applying the colours on the broken surface so formed, a feature of the manufacturing times. Now, on the contrary, many artists scrupulously preserve the purity of the ground to give transparency to the shadows. It is not quite certain, however, that mere glazing is the right way to express

the flatness of shadow, which may be much more successfully done by solid painting, the purity of the white ground being still carefully preserved for the sake of brightness; a muddy substratum always more or less degrading the bright colours.

Often the brown drawing on the ground was only a copy of one previously made on paper, and the picture itself was completed from finished studies. In the small gallery at Basle we see the drawings and the pictures side by side, as in the portraits of Burgmeister Meier zum Hasen and his wife Anna. In such cases the studies have more spirit and more truth than the finished work, which, although more elaborated, is but at second hand.

At first the method of making a brown drawing and glazing it over with oil was common to all; afterwards the Italians modified the proceeding. It has been contended that the ground was then absorbent, and so abstracted the oil employed as a vehicle, removing in some degree the cause of future yellowness in the colours. This theory induced the adoption of absorbent grounds a few years ago, but without any good result; the supposition being a mistaken one, as Sir Charles Eastlake has shown in his 'Materials for a History of Oil Painting.' On the contrary, there is little doubt the bright surface produced by the mixed vehicle of oil and varnish, when on a hard-sized ground, was considered a charm, and gave, besides, greater depth to the darks, and the choice of luminous transparent lights. Many of the Flemish masters were glass painters, and knew the value of light behind colours. This quality, which has contributed to raise water-colour painting into its present high position, was understood and attained on decorative works, in the middle ages, not only on glass, but in the translucent painting over metal



foil. Examples of a similar transparent painting may be found wherever Flemish or German pictures exist in their original state; and in Albert Dürer and others we discern through the thin yet brilliant lights a still brighter ground beneath. This, it will be seen, is exactly opposed to the principle of 'thin painting in shadows and thick on lights,' which is, however, a maxim founded on nature.

Van Mander, who is the most valuable writer of his time on the arts of his country, describes the whole process of working out a picture in his poem called 'Het Schilder Boeck.' Having arrived at the time to begin the finishing, he says, 'they proceeded carefully with the shades and tints, not loading the colour, but using it thin and sparingly, that the tones might be clear and glowing.' And here the marginal heading says, '*They mostly painted their works at once.*' In another such heading we read again, 'each colour in order not to fade is to be put into its place at once.' Two priceless maxims which we can only hope to realise in practice when the actual presence of the model, the presence of the natural object, animate or inanimate, we have to depict, gives us confidence and certainty.

This finishing at once Van Mander repeatedly mentions as having been done by the particular artists of whom he is writing. Speaking of an elaborate altar-piece by Peter Aartsen, he says: 'This was an excellent work, handled in a masterly and manly style, the flesh as well as other parts being mostly finished at once on the outline; and the whole was so judiciously executed that at a distance the effect was excellent.'

It was above observed that the system of colouring adopted by the first Flemish oil-painters may have been influenced by the existing practice of glass-painting.



They appear, in their early efforts at least, to have regarded the white panel as representing light behind a coloured and transparent medium, and aimed at giving brilliancy by allowing the ground to shine through. If these painters and their followers erred, it was in sometimes carrying out this principle too far. 'The lights are always transparent\*' (mere white excepted), and their shadows sometimes want depth.' The superior method of Rubens consisted in preserving transparency chiefly in his darks. Shadows produced in the mode of Rubens and Teniers are, strictly speaking, glazed, the lights solid. The Italian practice was rather to solid-paint the picture and apply ultimate glazings over it, an artificial unity of a sombre character being gained, and a choking want of atmosphere induced, which is of itself enough to make all the works of a school conventional, joyless, and unmeaning to the uninitiated. The traveller enters a gallery frequently in a partial state of fatigue, even while he mounts the ample staircase, and very likely in the heat of unalloyed Italian sunshine. In the first apartment or two he finds the earlier works, Luini's frescoes as at Milan, or the tempera-pictures as at Venice: these he can see clearly and enjoy. But when he advances into room after room of oil-pictures where all the whites are yellow, the blues green, the reds and every other colour brown; where figures or parts of figures are only dimly decipherable from the black backgrounds; he at last loses a sense of what they represent, and toils along only as a matter of duty to go to the end, not to give in, to earn his dinner by hard work, and the hardest lesson one can learn, which

\* I copy this sweeping assertion verbatim from Sir C. Eastlake, 'Materials,' &c., p. 408.

is this—that for whole generations an art may go on producing complacently and with pride masses of works that remain only a burden to the earth.

With regard to the implements employed by these patriarchs of oil-painting, the inquiry is interesting, although chiefly so in an antiquarian point of view. Strange as it may now seem, the palette was long unknown. The tints required were, it appears, placed in small cups; the older artists used shells for the purpose. In fresco, deeper vessels were required. Vasari, speaking of Aspertini of Bologna, ridicules his habit of painting with a girdle round him stuck full of small pots of colour. One of the earliest representations of a modern palette is in an engraving printed at Nürnberg in 1519, in which it appears in the hand of St. Luke.\* The pigments themselves were kept dry, and mixed with the vehicle in the quantity required immediately before being used. We first hear of their being kept in bladders (now entirely superseded by tubes) in English treatises. In Smith's 'Art of Painting in Oyl,' he says: 'I remember I had a parcel of colours given me in the year 1661, by a neighbouring yeoman, that were, as he said, left at his house by a trooper that quartered there in the time of the wars, about the year 1644. This man was by profession a picture-drawer, and his colours were all tyed up in bladders, according to the method before prescribed.'

Now that the colour-merchant's is a distinct trade, the artist is saved many additional difficulties. 'Yet it was of advantage to the old school,' says Northcote, 'that they were under the necessity of making most of the colours

\* Fra Bartolommeo, who died in 1517, was the inventor of the lay figure, the use of which improved the study of drapery.

themselves, or at least under the inspection of such as possessed chemical knowledge, which excluded all possibility of those adulterations to which we are exposed. Such was the case until the time of Kneller, who, when he came to this country, brought over a servant with him, whose sole employment was to prepare all his colours and materials for his work. Sir Godfrey afterwards set him up as a colour-maker for artists; and he was the first that kept a colour-shop in London.'

To return to modes of execution: Rubens, the greatest authority in the Flemish school, and one of the best painters that ever lived—not that his works are among the noblest, most beautiful, or most elevated, though he had certainly nearly the most versatile and perfect command of the means at the disposal of the artist—carried the principles of his predecessors to a higher development. Descamps says: 'In the pictures by Rubens, the obscurer masses have scarcely any substance of colour; this was one of the grounds of criticism with his enemies, who objected that his pictures were not painted with sufficient solidity, that they were little more than a tinted varnish, calculated to last no longer than the painter.' We now know that this objection had no just foundation. Everything at first under the pencil of Rubens had the appearance of a glaze only; but, although he often produced tones by means of the light priming of his cloth, that priming was at least covered with colour. One of the leading maxims he repeated oftenest in his school was that it was very dangerous to use white and black. 'Begin,' he was accustomed to say, 'by painting your shadows thinly; be careful not to let white insinuate itself into them; it is the poison of a picture except in the lights; if white be once allowed to dull the perfect



transparency and golden warmth of your shadows, your colours will be no longer glowing, but heavy and grey.' The case is very different with regard to the lights. Descamps goes on to say: 'In them the colours may be loaded as much as may be thought requisite. They have substance; it is necessary, however, to keep them pure. This is effected by laying each tint in its place, and the various tints next each other, so that, by a slight blending with the brush, they may be softened by passing one into the other without stirring them much.'

In the above extract we find Rubens cautioning against too free a use of white and black. In the Italian system, however, pictures, ultimately wrought out to the highest degree of warmth, were sometimes begun in black and white. One result is that they have darkened more than Flemish works. Tintoretto, being once asked which were the most admirable colours, answered, 'White and black;' but white and black are not colours at all, although they are pigments. Tintoretto used them most, and thus he answered the question; but his great picture called '*Il Paradiso*,' in the Ducal Palace at Venice, the largest in the world I suppose, about eighty feet long, strikes the spectator at first as quite other than Paradise.

Those artists who repainted the shadows over and over, either from confused habits or other causes, were compelled to use the hottest colours to represent the effect of transparency. Reynolds, who scarcely ever left the ground to appear in the manner of Rubens, supplied its worth, where he felt it to be desirable, with such bright colour. The English practice at his day, and after it, was opaque and bad, and, to make it worse, there was an affectation of cleverness, and a talk of touch, tone, *impasto*, *chiaroscuro*, and so forth. Above all, they thought a brown



hue was the right one. The 'Italian Masters' were loosely and indiscriminately quoted; and it is said that some valuable old pictures that had been well preserved were washed with some decoction to take off their 'rawness.' What, then, could be expected at such a time in the way of colour, except from a man who kept out of the stream like Hogarth? Gainsborough's landscapes are, many of them, all brown; and, being entirely without detail, are not imitative of nature at all. But, of all the degrading dealers' goods ever produced, the 'Morlands' carry the palm. They are daubed in a state of drunken stupor by a man who never had any fine perceptions when sober—done with the cheapest colours in the shortest time.

At that period—that is, about a century ago—water-colour painting was scarcely thought of. Paul Sandby, Cipriani, and others, began shortly after to make drawings by slight washes, which were much admired. Power of light and shadow, and intensity of colour, were not thought compatible with the simple means at command; body-colour was not dreamt of; indeed the opaque white then in use was entirely unsafe. The centuries of exclusive oil-practice had made the old tempera method quite forgotten; printing had caused the illuminator to be long ago obsolete. But within this half-century what a change has taken place! Our water-colour painters have attained all the powers of oil; and, whatever our Continental brethren deny to us, they admit the supremacy of English water-colour pictures in every walk, but especially in landscape.

Besides, the German discovery of the applicability of silica in solution (water-glass) to the surface of a wall picture, and so giving a perishable water-colour picture perfect permanence apparently, has superseded Fresco-painting.

By this means Daniel Maclise, whose name we write with honour, has accomplished the two noblest pictures in England, the 'Field of Waterloo,' and the 'Death of Nelson,' in the houses of Parliament. These, or at least the first-named of the two works, has, we are sorry to hear, exhibited some signs of change; but it is understood this has been caused by the painter before his steaming apparatus was ready, in his anxiety to see the ultimate appearance of his picture, having laid on too much silica by means of a brush.

## LECTURE XVI.

## HISTORY OF PAINTING.

If you attempt to get any clear idea of the general history of painting, the progress in its spirit and in its form, ascending to a certain point and again descending, by reading Lanzi, or any other author who divides the subject by Schools, you will find the greatest difficulty. The rise and flourishing of the art in this locality or in that, related in a detached manner as the School of Siena, the School of Bologna, is of comparatively little interest, the geographical position of a painter or line of painters being a matter of infinitely little moment compared to the spirit of the works, and their value to us looking back upon them.

At the same time it is of great importance to understand how specific styles developed themselves in different places, and that certain divisions of the art, from local circumstances or the predominance of individual masters, occupied the ground and rose to paramount importance, as Form in the Roman school and Colour in that of Venice. The richness and splendour of everything in Venice even yet strike the visitor as being in perfect harmony with its school of art; and the Cyclopean massiveness of the ancient buildings in Florence have the same expression of strength and material power we see in Michelangelo.

But we must confine our notice to a few of the masters who gave the most perfect form to the characteristics of the local art.

Indeed it is this predominance of a characteristic, this specific style, that furnishes the proper distinctive of a School, and determines how far it extends. If the characteristic ceases, and a new one is commenced, then it is to be considered as another school, or at least a new epoch. I shall try to point out a few of the men whose genius formed or established the predominating excellences in their separate localities, beginning with Italy on the first dawn of the Western freedom from the Byzantine fetters.

The earliest known artists of the West are Tuscans, and of the thirteenth century; NICOLA PISANO (of Pisa), and GIUNTA, of the same place. Nicola was a sculptor, and his works exhibit distinctly the commencement of the revived study of the antique and of nature, which gained strength with every succeeding age, and which is termed the Renaissance. In sculpture the study of the remains of antiquity assisted a much more speedy development of the powers of the art, so that the sculptor may be considered as nearly a century in advance of the painter, the unexplored difficulties of *chiaro-scuro*, perspective, &c. being slowly overcome. This difference, however, has been ultimately in favour of painting, the study of nature being always infinitely important to it, and no authority interposing to contract the artist's studies as well as shorten his difficulties. Nicola Pisano was born about 1200.

His perception of beautiful form, and his power over its expression, are entirely different from what is visible, not only in contemporary paintings, but in the works of CIMA BUE, who lived in the next generation; and though the sentiment that animates Giotto and his followers elevates



their works into the highest place, still the power over form and expression in Nicola's sculptures remains unapproached by painting even down to Masaccio. Cimabue was born in 1240, and takes an important place in the history of art, by Vasari having commenced his biographical history with his memoir; by the anecdote of his picture of the 'Madonna Enthroned' (still well preserved in Santa Maria Novella in Florence) having caused such rejoicing that the district where he lived was called the Borgo Allegri; and, above all, by his having found the obscure boy Giotto and educated him. All these circumstances have made his name important, although his works are very Byzantine in character, and exhibit little advance on previous art.

Contemporary with Cimabue was Duccio, of Siena, who began the new school of painting there. But the great man of the age was Giotto, born in 1276, the first painter who freed himself from the strict repetition of past ideas. Of his works at Padua I have spoken; but other labours of this illustrious man, painter of history, portrait, and miniature, worker in mosaic, sculptor, and architect, would occupy a lecture, had we time. The only work I shall mention here is the Campanile of Florence, which occupies nearly as important a place in architecture as his works in the Arena chapel do in the sister art.

The influence of Giotto was immense; his scholars being very numerous, and many of them important in themselves. The succeeding age is entirely occupied by the Giotteschi, as his followers are called, except in Siena, where SIMONE MEMMI was considered his successful rival. At the same time in Rome and elsewhere native artists were springing up; and I may mention PIETRO CAVALLINI, whom Vertue and Walpole supposed to be the 'Petrus

Romanus Civis' of the shrine of Edward the Confessor at Westminster, and the architect of the Crosses to Queen Eleanor. In Venice we find no artists till the beginning of the following century, when the little island of Murano, celebrated also as the seat of the famous glass-works, became the abode of several, who were succeeded by the Vivarini and Bellini, two family names of great import in the development of Venetian painting—GIOVANNI BELLINI being himself one of the greatest men in Italian art previous to its meridian. He died soon after 1516, at the great age of ninety, when Titian was nearly forty, even in the presence of whose works we can afford to reverence those of Bellini.

The name of the first Bellini brings us down from the Trecentisti, or artists of the 1300, to the Quattrocentisti, or those of the 1400, in whose hands a great advance in all the material qualities of art takes place. Freedom of expression, as well as individuality of character, becomes more complete; masters give themselves up to specific study, as PAOLO UCCELLO, who died in 1432, to the working out of perspective, and MASOLINO, who left light and shadow much better understood than they had been before. But the list of great painters of the century is a long one. MASACCIO, born in 1402; FRA ANGELICO, 1387; FILIPPO LIPPI, 1412; LUCA SIGNORELLI, of Cortona, 1439; PIETRO PERUGINO, born in Perugia in 1446; SQUARCIONE, of Padua, 1394; ANDREA MANTEGNA, of the same place, born in 1430, are a few of the great leaders—Masaccio and Mantegna the most important of them all in preparing the way for the full artistic power and the complete dramatic narrative of the next age, the greatest that the world has yet seen in painting.

Fra Angelico remains the most apart from the stream;

he did not value art for its own sake, but simply for the good he could do religion by its application. He was first occupied in the illumination of sacred books, and the small minute manner and elaborately ornamented draperies of his miniature pictures show the school in which he had worked so long. His larger fresco works are altogether finer. 'His Virgins are incarnations of holiness; they are the most emphatically feminine; they are to the Madonnas of other painters what Eve may be supposed to have been to her daughters, before the Fall—their lineaments seem to include all other likenesses, to assume to each several votary the semblance he loves most to gaze upon.—It was because Fra Angelico's whole life was love, diverted by his vow of celibacy from any specific object, that his imagination thus sought for and found inspiration in heaven.—Next to the Madonna, I may mention the heads of our Saviour, of the Apostles and Saints, in Fra Angelico's pictures, as excelling in expression and beauty, as well as those of the elect in his representation of the "Last Judgment;" his delineations of the worldly, the wicked, the reprobate, are uniformly feeble and inadequate; his success or failure is always proportioned to his moral sympathy or distaste.'

This well-expressed eulogy by Lord Lindsay gives us only a true estimate of the purity of Fra Angelico, whose humility alone prevented his being made Archbishop of Florence, and who was after his death called Beato, and elevated by the first step to canonisation. But he belonged rather to the purism of the past than to the dramatic spirit of the future: the naturalism of the coming age of art, and the splendour of the 'Pagan Popes' of the 1500, required something different; and even his own pupils were drawn under the influence of Masaccio, whose pic-



tures, in the Brancacci chapel in the Church del Carmine, Florence, formed the school of all the great painters of Tuscany and Rome, Raphael and Michelangelo included.\*

The university city of Padua was then a place of great importance in education; and here the school established by Squarcione, after his travels in Greece and elsewhere, making drawings from the antique, had an extensive influence. His house was one of the attractions of Padua, and he had the greatest number of pupils known in the history of art; he had 137 scholars, and was called the *primo maestro* of painters. The great thing he did in the history of art was to spread the love of the antique. From his house proceeded masters to other schools: Jacopo Bellini to Venice, Marco Zoppo to Bologna, and Andrea Mantegna, the founder of the school of Mantua, the greatest painter, in point of trained invention and mastery of form, that had then appeared.

North of the Alps, in France, Germany, and England, painters of altar-pieces and wall-pictures must have existed, but whose works and even whose names have been lost. The mere names, indeed, of several in England are preserved by records; but, as we know nothing of what they did, they have no interest for us. The school of illuminators of books in Cologne continued from the early days of Charlemagne, and it is there we hear of the first great painter of pictures whose works are still preserved, Master WILHELM VON CÖLN. In the annals of the Dominicans of Frankfort he is mentioned as 'a most excellent painter, to whom there was not the like in his art;' he settled

\* The figure of St. Paul, borrowed by Raphael from the Brancacci chapel, is now ascertained to be not by Masaccio but by Filippino Lippi.



there as early as 1370. In the Gallery of Munich, and elsewhere, are some of his works. The school of Cologne continued to produce other masters with considerable executive powers; but the Van Eycks, with their great discovery about 1410, draw all attention towards Bruges, where ROGER VAN DER WEYDE, born about 1400, and HANS MEMLING, about thirty years later, perpetuated the fame of Van Eyck and the new method.

Memling was a brother of the Hospital of St. John, in Bruges, and the *châsse* or relic-case of St. Ursula there is his most remarkable production. It is of Gothic design, embellished on every side by miniature paintings in oil illustrating the history of that saint with her attendant virgins; the colour of these is beautiful, the compositions dramatic, and the execution nearly perfect. Another extraordinary work of Memling is the picture in Munich said to contain about 1500 figures and objects, being a panel of six feet in length representing the 'Journey of the Wise Men,' with the 'Joys and Sorrows of Mary' occupying the foreground. The figures are from one inch to six in length, and the whole is one mass of life, and the most wonderful example of the style of the illuminator of books applied to a larger surface.

This school, which represented all subjects in the costume of the day with extreme detail, continued with little alteration till after 1500, when the influence of Raphael and Michelangelo, conveyed by travelled artists, effected a rapid change. In Germany and in Holland it was the same; in the latter country the principal masters being DIERICK STUERBOUT of Haarlem, LUCAS VAN LEYDEN, and JAN DE MABUSE. Contemporary with these, who all, except Stuerbout, lived into the 1500, QUINTIN MATSYS was painting in Antwerp his admirable pictures; the great

altar-piece now in the Museum there, and others, surprising his brother painters. You can see a good work by him at Windsor, called the 'Misers.' Mabuse visited England; he was the first of a long line of foreign painters who came over in succession, taking possession of this country as a barbarous but paying settlement, unprovided with that item of civilisation possessed by them. His visit was during the later years of Henry VII.; and there is an admirable small portrait-picture of the family of that king by him at Hampton Court, wherein the future Henry VIII. and his wicked sister appear as chubby little children. About the same time came Torrigiano, who was employed on the tomb of Henry VII. His stay brings us to the appearance of Holbein with his introductory letter from Erasmus to Sir Thomas More, and who painted so many portraits of our illustrious men and women of that eventful time. To Holbein succeeded Sir Antony More, the favourite of Philip and Mary;\* and under Elizabeth we find the lesser names of Lucas de Heere and Federigo Zuccherro. In that prosperous reign, however, we first hear of native English artists,† Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver being admirable miniaturists.

To return from this digression; we may accept the

\* Perhaps I may venture to call him the greatest portrait-painter ever in this country. The power of his portraiture was very striking in the great Manchester Exhibition, beside all other masters. Of course he had not the refinement of Vandyck, 'il Cavaliere Pittore,' but his sitters did not need it.

† Of course, I mean in painting exclusively. In architecture no foreigner ever occupied the field, and an architect (Inigo Jones) is the only representative of England in P. de la Roche's great picture of the assembled artists. In sculpture William Austen stands beside the contemporary Italian masters, as we have seen by Flaxman's authority, page 106.

name of ALBERT DÜRER as a connecting link between Holland and Italy, he having visited both countries, and exchanged courtesies with Lucas van Leyden on the one hand, and Raphael on the other. In his 'Journal of Travels' he says, laconically, 'I was invited to dinner by Master Lucas, who engraves on copper; he is a little man, and a native of Leyden.' And on the back of a drawing of two life-studies, by Raphael, in the collection of the Archduke Charles in Vienna, there is written in Dürer's hand, '1515, Raphael d'Urbino, who has been esteemed so highly by the pope, drew these naked figures and sent them to Albrecht Dürer, in Nürnberg, to show him his hand.'\*

Of Albert Dürer I have already spoken a little under the head of 'Engraving.' He died in 1528, and his friend LUCAS CRANACH in 1553; before which later date had begun the imitation of Italian design and spirit, which by-and-by wholly obliterated the Germanic and Dutch character, giving instead fantastic adaptations of Michel-angelesque attitude and proportion, and an affectation of the nude and those subjects requiring it. In the hands of Goltzius and Spranger this new rage attained the most violent development. Fuseli is singularly energetic in his denunciation of this style; absurdly so, considering how much his own art resembles the worst of the masters in question, which he calls 'the bloated excrescence of diseased brains;' but he admits that with it came something of Venetian colour, which excellence afterwards distin-

\* Beginning with Dürer and some contemporary with him, we find a host of eminent painters who were also engravers—Aldegraver, Hans Sebald Beham, and his brother Bartel, Altdorfer, Hans Burgkmair, Jost Amman. These and many others have been called Little Masters. *The Little Masters of Nürnberg* were seven in number.



guished the succeeding schools of Flanders and Holland ; adding, 'The frantic pilgrimage to Italy ceased at the apparition of the two meteors of art, Rubens and Rembrandt.'

## 1500.

In many regards the year 1500 is the beginning of the most memorable period in modern history, and most especially in the history of art. A geographical as well as a literary new world was just opened ; the study of antique art was exerting an influence corresponding to that classic literature had already exercised ; the science of Perspective was exciting attention, the first publication on that branch of optics being dated 1505 ; and, at the end of the first quarter of the century, religion and the Bible were occupying new attention, at the same time that the popes, having at last got undivided power in their own states, were adding splendour to the Vatican as if to make up by a glorious environment for the loss of distant respect.

In every book or essay on painting in Italy, the constellation of artists of the early part of the sixteenth century receives the greatest share of attention, necessarily and deservedly. But in these few pages, which are intended merely to show the chronological sequence and to indicate the steps towards full development and the subsequent changes of the art, till it sank to its lowest ebb everywhere during last century, I shall not find time to dwell on the beauties of the full flower during the short period of its perfection.

Every one now knows some little about the great masters of this period, especially by engravings. Indeed, the prevalence of these of all grades of inferiority has pre-occupied the minds of many students, so that the finest works in existence have become nauseous to them—the



originals being beyond their reach, and the small copies giving the bald facts without the informing spirit. This is the case, above all, with the 'Cartoons' of Raphael; which have been so much engraved and so much described, and, above all, have been so much praised for qualities which many ordinary artists can realise even better, that I should quite despair to make you apprehend the real importance of these works as examples of that highest art where the idea goes before historic truth, in which dignity of character is represented as dignity of body, in whose execution are united the original instinct of genius and the added proprieties of learning.

In the year 1500—when Venice was in its greatest power and glory; when Florence had enjoyed the long and powerful rule of Lorenzo de' Medici, and was just beginning to experience more troubles; and when Rome had a succession of 'Pagan Popes'—Alexander Borgia, the most infamous of pontiffs, Julius II., an ambitious warrior and intellectual man, and Leo X., the lover of all the arts—the greatest number of eminent artists were alive, and their respective ages may give you some idea of their relative character, as well as the richness of the age.

GIOVANNI BELLINI was still working, but advanced in life, being seventy-three, although he lived many years after. MANTEGNA and FRANCA, too, were still employing their powers, conscious that their day was nearly done, and that greater art was coming.

LEONARDO DA VINCI was in his forty-ninth year, occupied on the 'Last Supper' in Milan. LUINI and others of the Milanese school were just beginning their labours.

FRA BARTOLOMMEO, then thirty-one, had just resigned the brush for a time, and retired into his cell, profoundly depressed by the dreadful death of the reformer Savonarola,

his friend and leader, who had been strangled, and his body publicly burned, by his enemies.

RAPHAEL, already the favourite of fortune, was seventeen, and ready a year or two later to visit Florence and become the dear friend of the distressed Bartolommeo, who has been termed the true master of Raphael, so much advantage did the latter receive from the intimacy and works of the monk.

MICHELANGELO, twenty-six years of age, but not yet distinguished, only to be so in a few years by his Cartoon of Pisa, and by the *Pietà*, or group of the Virgin with the dead Christ on her knees; after executing which he was invited to Rome by Julius II. to construct his tomb, productive of endless vexation and loss of the middle life incalculably precious of such a man—a waste of life to be followed by other waste of life connected with the building of St. Peter's and what not, so that all he did, immensely great as it was, was done hurriedly and at intervals.

ANDREA DEL SARTO, PARMIGIANO, SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO, were all three growing near to manhood, and preparing to earn such greatness as they could under the wings of other Victories than their own. Correggio and Julio Romano were younger, too young to be noticed here.

TITIAN (turning again to Venice) was now twenty-three; he had left Bellini, who was too old to be troubled by disciples, and had begun the long and triumphant career productive of so many glorious examples of colour and shadow, as well as invention and character.

GIORGIONE was exactly the same age, and inspired by the same love of the most charming part of painting, although destined to a shorter term of life wherein to manifest it.

The result of the various talents and numerous productions of these masters and their many scholars was immense. The Renaissance, which had begun with Nicola Pisano in sculpture, and with Giotto in painting—although it had been long accumulating resources, and, in obedience to the impulses of the times, aspiring not to be the imitator or transcriber of nature merely, but to represent the *Ideas*, especially those of a theological kind, then dominant—had accomplished its educational mission. In architecture and in ornamentation the antique had indeed supplanted native character; the movement, moreover, was a general one, not confined to the arts; the middle ages had faded into the modern while it was gradually operating, and painting was perhaps less affected by the increased authority of the ancients than any other study.

But there is a moment, if men only knew it—though if they did they could not prolong it—when the highest point of prosperity, either of a country or an art, is attained; the culminating instant when the sun is on the meridian, and from which we, looking back on history, see the subsequent centuries as a descending ridge. Perhaps, in the history of art, this moment was that of Raphael's death, perhaps a few years before.

One cause of decline in the schools was the authority of deceased masters, which increased with time till resemblance to the past, and a consequent lack of originality and vitality, severed the ties between the artist and the spirit of his own time. The last form of this evil influence is seen in the imitation being preferred to the original. Thus TIBALDI, born in 1527, was called Michelangelo Riformato, the Reformed Michelangelo; and Niccolò dell' Abate was praised above Raphael.



1600.

Let us pass on to another century. Tibaldi is dead, and Niccolò; and not these only, but greater men: CORREGGIO, who died in 1534; JULIO ROMANO, a great painter without any sympathies, in 1546; DANIEL DA VOLTERRA in 1567; PAUL CAGLIARI (VERONESE), most delightful and noble painter, with a scenic tendency, in 1588; TINTORETTO, a trenchant genius, but of the gladiatorial sort, in 1594.

In Venice, Florence, Rome, inferior men are in the high places, where, however, there is less activity and less honour. In Siena, Padua, and other old cities we have heard of, there is little stir; but in Bologna the three CARRACCI have formed a school on eclectic principles which carries everything before it. In 1600 they were in full vigour, LUDOVICO being in that year forty-five, AGOSTINO forty-one, and ANNIBALE forty—all able and full of activity, and attended by many scholars.

These scholars are the Academics, who for long, indeed until lately, were thought by many to be the best of all artists—DOMENICHINO, born in 1581, GUIDO RENI in 1575, ALBANI in 1578. In the Farnese and other palaces the grand ornamentation of the Carracci may be seen. Churches were now not so much in want of pictures, either for pious purposes, such as might be served by Fra Angelico's, or for ostentation, like those demanded by Leo X. Heathen mythology is now the predominant subject, and easel-pictures for sale are in considerable demand.

The academic feeling spread throughout Italy, producing correctness in treatment of the subject, and a more perfect command of all the external qualities. Technical improvement, but no other, is the characteristic of the art of the 1600, which declined so completely into a system that the



artists of the following age received the name of *Macciati*. This term, on the appearance of the imitators of CARAVAGGIO, a strong and coarse painter who died in 1609, was applied to those who adopted a florid and decorative character, while the followers of Caravaggio were called *Tondroni* or *Naturalisti*. Having indicated these terms, which show that academics and principles, not feeling and genius, were in the ascendant, I may leave the future history of art in Italy. At the present day it is unspeakably fallen.

The Italianisation of Flemish and German art, already noticed, became complete. The native tendency of all northern art is towards *realities*, not ideas; towards true imitation, whether of human nature and animals, or of landscape and things. This tendency, abundantly shown by the early masters, whether Van Eyck in Flanders or Dürer in Franconia, was violently thwarted by the imitation of the great masters, so that art seems now to play no part of any consequence north of the Alps till the extraordinary and inexhaustible powers of Rubens revived it in national esteem.

Rubens was born in Cologne in 1577, where his father dying when he was ten years old, he was carried to Antwerp, his adopted city. Precocious, versatile, he was one of the most fully armed for success in all the annals of biography. 'Rubens met his advantages,' says Fuseli, 'with an ardour of which ordinary minds can form no idea, if we compare the period at which he is said to have seriously applied himself to painting under the tuition of Otto van Veen with the unbounded power he had acquired over the instruments of art when he set out for Italy, where we instantly discover him not as the pupil, but as the successful rival, of the masters whose works he

had selected for the objects of his emulation.' Veronese had carried magnificence into colour and design, and Rubens cannot be said to have done anything wholly new in that respect; but with his facility of execution, his new methods, his inexhaustible versatility and instantaneous characterisation, and above all by the Flemish character of his taste, his works must be always supremely delightful to those who luxuriate in art, coveting only sensuous enjoyment, unlimited indulgence, and prodigality. The love of nature which characterises all true northern art distinguishes the works of Rubens in an eminent degree. No Italian (broadly speaking) ever could paint a dog or a horse: Rubens' animals are most admirable, and his landscapes also such as could not have been done by any other hand.

Besides, Rubens emancipated painting from many conventions, and by his universal sympathies left it entirely free. Altogether disconnected from religion, design was then becoming stilted and meaningless, without charm of colour and excellence *as art*. He restored the charm, and united it, even in religious subjects, with common nature, strong, full, coarse, yet lordly expression, leaving a mixed result of good and evil, the necessary outcoming from the Academic and Machinist Schools, so depressing to the mind.

Of all the scholars of Rubens, VANDYCK, born in 1599, is the best, as well as the best known to us by his long residence in London as a portrait-painter. Contemporary Flemish artists it is not necessary to mention, but in Holland at the same time appeared another extraordinary master whose influence has been nearly as great.

REMBRANDT was born in 1606 near Leyden. Of all styles of colouring and of light and shade that of Rembrandt is the most elaborately studied; yet is it supremely

natural, only nature read in one uniform manner. Daguerre and photography show us with what marvellous penetration Rembrandt seized upon the truth of the effect of confined light. Much has been said about his father's mill having been his school, 'with its strong and solitary light and impenetrable shadow within;' but all the flour-mills I have entered have been powdered white, and not by any means like the intense caverns, the favourite backgrounds of Rembrandt. In general cultivation and all external circumstances the reverse of Rubens, Rembrandt and he stand together united by genius as the representatives of Holland and Flanders, and the first masters of the art of the seventeenth century.

From the time of Rembrandt the Dutch style has been synonymous with *Genre*, the familiar representation of everyday life and manners. Miraculous imitation of the surfaces of objects, profound and vivid appreciation of character—the one making even a cabbage or a brass pan delightful for skill of hand, the other preserving every phase of Dutch society—these are the elements of the school, how different from those of the earlier times we have been reviewing!

But this too has been done; whatever fidelity could do has been accomplished; and the mere list of names of the best Dutch *genre* painters is too long to give here. They were several of them pupils of Rembrandt, and nearly all close together like a summer season of painters. Gerard Douw, Ostade, Maas, Teniers, Jan Steen, these are the leading men in technical qualities and in invention, if any could be said to lead where each one painted in a way of his own, but all in one spirit. Rapid as had been the rise, the deterioration of the school was as rapid. It tended to a mere assemblage of things to be imitated; in Wouver-



mans, one of the delights of old-fashioned collectors, we find what may be called nonsense-pictures, groups of cavaliers and ladies on horseback, with dogs coming out of magnificent ruins, items brought together without a meaning; and in Denner, who tried to paint the individual hairs on fur, we find the 'finish' degenerated into insensibility.

All this time I think the word 'landscape' has scarcely been mentioned. Without perfect command of the means of imitation, without perspective both linear and aerial, landscape-painting could not exist. The only name necessary to be mentioned till we reach the Dutch school in its perfection is that of CLAUDE, who was born in 1600. Although born in Lorraine he lived all his life in Rome, where he painted his best pictures from 1640 to 1660. But of him and of others it is not necessary to speak. Landscape has made immense advances in England in our own day, so as to leave all others except Claude behind; and with us, where the support of art depends on gentle tastes, the department most likely to be attended to and advanced is landscape, although exactly that having least real hold upon us as men and women, and requiring least intellectual insight into its development. Turner is the most varied as well as the most original painter of landscape the world has seen or may see for generations to come.

France, always fond of all the forms of art, and distinguished in all the ornamental arts of the middle ages, has been late in the cultivation of high pictorial qualities. Nor is the French art connected in its history or practice with that of the rest of the world in any particular or especial manner requiring to be noticed. The peculiarity of French art is its purely historic character. Series of pictures in which the political events, changes of dynasty, coronations, and above all the battles in which the French



army has distinguished itself, have been fully recorded by contemporary painters, and form the most remarkable productions of French art to an Englishman.

But the art in France has passed through one interesting phase which deserves record. The drama and poetry in general were quickly subjugated in Paris by the classic taste, indeed so completely that the best dramatists of the French stage confined themselves mostly to classic stories in stilted heroic verse, planned according to the unities imperative in the ancient theatre, where no movable scenery existed and a chorus told the audience the narrative.

This spirit at last took possession of painting, which had become insipid and silly to the last degree in the practice of the successors of Watteau. VIEN, born in 1716, was considered the regenerator of French painting, having produced a reaction in favour of a staid and stiff academic taste, which was carried by his pupil, JACQUES LOUIS DAVID, born in 1748, to the preposterous length previously adopted by the dramatists.

David was about forty when the French Revolution placed him in the position of a legislator. At that time Brutus, Cato, the Stoics, love of country, and so forth were the mad affectations, and afforded the tawdry figures of speech of the new era, and the art of David rose into unlimited admiration; not only that of his own studio, but that of his principal scholars also. Of these Guérin, who lived down to 1833, was the greatest, an admirable technical artist wholly given up to realising the antique manner in thought and form. Another pupil of David, but one less limited in his subjects, was Gérard (1770-1837), who is seen in the French palaces as the painter of the great battle-fields and ceremonies of his time, an office which

Horace Vernet with equal or greater power has fulfilled more recently.

In Germany, too, painting has been regenerated, and has passed through a trial similar to that in France, not indeed by the adoption of classic, but of Italian religious imitation. Germany was the ruling country in the middle ages, and has always retained a love for the old times; there seemed a propriety therefore in the attempt to elevate the art of the beginning of the present century by returning to the *purism* of the early schools of Italy. True, this sentiment was that of a transition time which blossomed into the Cinquecento, the time of Raphael, Titian, Michelangelo; and in the hands of Overbeck it was final, he and Cornelius having taken to the ascetic ways of the old Church, and with the zeal of converts and monks shown themselves ready to sacrifice all but what was now denominated 'Christian' art. This movement was accompanied by another, a revolt against the academic and a love of the romantic; and, when King Ludwig set about converting Munich from a third-rate town into one of the first capitals in Europe by great works in architecture and all the arts, a magnificent opportunity was offered to the masters of the new movement, Cornelius, Schnorr, Hess, Kaulbach, and others, who have identified themselves with the history of their country.

In England the art itself, historical, genre, or landscape, is but a century old, dating from the time of HOGARTH, who died in 1764 in his sixty-eighth year, and yet we have had a little revival of our own. In the midst of the prolific and facile production of every sort of picture, especially the sentimental, the Pre-Raphaelites, a small number of youths whom sympathy of intellect and taste combined into a kind of temporary fellowship, determined to hold by severer

practice and higher aims; and without any intention of retrograde limitations, either in execution or in sentiment, like those of Overbeck (which the name 'Pre-Raphaelites' might lead people to imagine), they espoused fidelity to nature as St. Francis espoused poverty. This movement has been productive of severer study and honester views, even in many who ignore the principles, real or imagined,—where perhaps no *principles* existed—of the originators. English art is all the healthier for it.

## LECTURE XVII.

## TERMS IN ART.

## PRINCIPLES,—THE CONVENTIONAL,—THE IDEAL.

IN some of these little lectures, and more especially in some of the later ones, those on painting, it appears I have used certain words which require explanation. Such are those at the head of my paper, and others, as *Chiaro-scuro*, *Picturesque*, and it seems you even desire me to say something on *Beauty and Taste*. Recondite subjects some of these are, to speak of which will lead me into the danger of dogmatising, of teaching *principles*, and of laying down the law for the development of your abilities either as ornamentists or as artists, which I by no means desire.

You will observe, when I undertook these short addresses, it was the history of the arts we proposed to review, and I have endeavoured to relate the facts without more comment than was necessary to connect them together and to point out the determining causes of the changes recorded. Facts enrich the inventive faculty and suggest ideas; a knowledge of the successive features exhibited through time in the ornamental arts insures propriety in future treatment; but the inculcation of principles binds the student, and causes him to work under the finger of authority. A false or mistaken principle is deadly; a too rigid interpretation of truth itself is dangerous; the safest



way of teaching general rules is by their occasional illustration in the examples in the hands of the students, there being always reasons, then easily made obvious, for their application.

Besides, I do not think learning has much to do with the cultivation of the fine arts. As a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, about thirteen years ago, remarks: 'No two great classes of human intelligence drink really from the same spring. The lamp of learning, however brightly it may burn, can shed no available light on that separate world where the true artist lives. What that world is—the two poles of which consist of the highest and lowest human faculties, those of the hand and those of the spirit—would be difficult to define. But perhaps some clue to the intense happiness it affords may be traced to the fact that the tree of knowledge has so little growth there. The very homage that an artist pays to his art must be passionate, and not, in the literary sense, intellectual. Better it is for him to be the doting slave of an impulse than the reasoning and conscious disciple of a principle. We doubt whether one ignorant of the facts would read Reynolds's cultivated mind in the technical strength of his works, or guess Stothard's comparatively illiterate (?) life in the air of classic elegance which stamps his style.' We have seen that the Academic school did not paint the great pictures of the world; and the successors of that school, who flattered themselves with the name of Idealists (*Idealisti*), have received from the world at large the fatal cognomen of Machinists (*Macchinisti*).

Some principles, however, there are which may be affirmed both in the fine and decorative arts. The Department of Science and Art has indeed printed on those large placards that now hang up in our class-rooms certain

rules regarding the application of ornament to surfaces and materials, which deserve to be read aloud. The first is general; the others relate to particular applications of art.

I.

1. The decorative arts arise from and should properly be attendant upon architecture. 2. Architecture should be the material expression of the wants, the faculties, and the sentiments, of the age in which it is created. 3. Style in architecture is the peculiar form that expression takes under the influence of climate and the materials at command.

II.

*Metal works, pottery, and plastic forms generally.*—

1. The form should be most carefully adapted to use, being studied for elegance and beauty of line as well as for capacity, strength, mobility, &c. 2. In ornamenting the construction, care should be taken to preserve the general form, and to keep the decoration subservient to it by low relief or otherwise; the ornament should be so arranged as to enhance by its lines the symmetry of the original form, and assist its constructive strength. 3. If arabesques or figures in the round are used, they should arise out of the ornamental and constructive forms, and not be merely applied. 4. All projecting parts should have careful consideration to render them as little liable to injury as is consistent with their purpose. 5. It must ever be remembered that repose is required to give value to ornament, which in itself is secondary and not principal.

III.

*Carpets.*—1. The surface of a carpet, serving as a ground to support all objects, should be quiet and negative, with-

out strong contrast of either forms or colours. 2. The leading forms should be so disposed as to distribute the pattern over the whole floor, not pronounced either in the direction of breadth or length, all 'up and down' treatments being erroneous. 3. The decorative forms should be flat, without shadow or relief, whether derived from ornament or direct from flowers or foliage. 4. In colour the general ground should be negative, low in tone, and inclining to the tertiary hues, the leading forms of the pattern being expressed by the darker secondaries; and the primary colours or white, if used at all, should be only in small quantities, to enhance the tertiary hues and to express the geometrical basis that rules the distribution of the forms.

## IV.

*Printed garment fabrics, muslins, calicoes, &c.*—1. The ornament should be flat, without shadow and relief. 2. If flowers, foliage, or other natural objects, are the *motive*, they should not be direct imitations of nature, but conventionalised in obedience to the above rule. 3. The ornament should cover the surface either by a diaper based on some regular geometrical figure or growing out of itself by graceful flowing curves; any arrangement that carries lines or pronounces figures in the direction of breadth is to be avoided, and the effect produced by the folding of the stuff should be carefully studied. 4. The size of the pattern should be regulated by the material for which it is intended:—*small* for close thick fabrics, such as gingham, &c.; *larger* for fabrics of more open textures, such as muslins, barèges, &c.; largely covering the ground on de-laines, and more dispersed on cotton or linen.

In none of these rules do we find an exact and deceptive

representation of nature recommended: the vertical character of the wall is not to be destroyed; the nature of the surface of a woven fabric is to be considered; the necessary thickness of cast metal is to be the guide for determining the character of the details raised upon it.

In all such rules, perhaps, there is a leaning to over-strictness, resulting from the desire to counteract the common defect of excess in the application of ornament, the straining to give 'as much as possible for the money,' and to offer quantity at all events, if not quality. Be this as it may, the difference between an imitation of nature as complete and exact as the artist can render it, and the suggestive resemblance settled by the intractability of the material or any other condition, is a conventional difference agreed upon for certain reasons, and the treatment resulting is a conventional treatment.

Throughout the whole history of art we find conventions necessarily resorted to: at the beginning because the powers of imitation were not adequate to the more perfect portrait as often as because that more perfect portrait was not wanted, and afterwards because the generalised or imperfect image was known and fixed in the public mind. To trace some of these is curious and interesting, showing us the character of different peoples, as well as the genealogy of forms we use that have long ceased to convey any meaning to us. Take for instance the waving line employed by the early Greeks to represent water: it has all the undulating variety that a line is capable of, and shows the same sense of beauty that produced the 'Venus' and 'Apollo.' Compare with it the zigzag employed by the Egyptians for the same purpose, which has a rigid, fixed, angular character, indicating no artistic sympathy, giving promise of no progression. Yet have these zigzag lines



passed, it is said, through the borders of mosaics into Sicilian doorways under the Norman rule, till at last we claim them as the distinctive ornament of the latest Romanesque or Norman arch.



The entire imitative arts of some countries have been confined within a convention restricted from development and remaining the same for centuries, except that the execution might be more or less perfect. The Doric and Ionic capitals and shafts, proportioned on given principles, served the Greeks for nearly a thousand years. By the law of the Koran the first command of the Decalogue, 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything in the earth,' was literally enforced; but the love of ornament was too strong to allow the civilised Moslems to exist without it, and the Saracenic style sprang up, which is one of the most decided, elegant, and satisfactory, in the world for flat surfaces; perhaps it is the most instructive example, although it is only one simple convention, little more than two generalised leaf-shapes, one turned up, the other down. Byzantine art was, and is, a crowd of conventions.

Convention gave rise to allegory. In all formative arts we can only convey ideas by formalising them under the figures of objects recognised by the sense of sight. Victory is to be indicated; a fair and noble winged heroine is

sculptured over the triumphal arch, descending with a trophy of arms in her hand, and you have a sensation of triumph no words can convey. The victor received a palm branch or a laurel crown; these became the types of his honour. Hope, which is a pure mental emotion, is to be suggested—hope, which is the stay of the mind, and enables us to brave passing evils; a woman lovely and sad resting on an anchor, the stay of the ship in the dragging storm, is presented to us; at first the anchor itself alone represents the idea. All these types and allegories have been some time or another efficient arrows in the artistic quiver, now thrown aside, perhaps for ever.

But by far the most important question connected with the subject is that of the degree of resemblance to nature allowed us in the decorative arts; in sculptured stone, or flowered paper for our rooms. In a little book on the Oxford Museum, by Dr. Acland and Mr. Ruskin, are the following remarks by the latter gentleman, conveying an exposition of the question, discriminating and clear:—

‘The highest art in all kinds is that which conveys the most truth, and the best ornamentation possible would be the painting of interior walls with frescoes by Titian, representing perfect humanity in colour; and the sculpture of exterior walls by Phidias, representing perfect humanity in form. Titian and Phidias are precisely alike in their conception and treatment of nature\*—everlasting standards of the right.

‘Beneath ornamentation such as men like these could bestow, falls in various rank, according to its subordination to vulgar uses or inferior places, what is commonly conceived as ornamental art. The lower its office and the less

\* Such wilfully absurd assertions as this we must be always ready to overlook in this elocutionary writer.

tractable its material, the less of nature it should contain, until a zigzag becomes the best ornament for the hem of a robe, and a mosaic of coloured glass the best design for a coloured window. But all these forms of lower art are to be conventional only because they are subordinate; not because conventionalism is in itself a good or desirable thing. All right conventionalism is a wise acceptance of, and compliance with, conditions of restraint or inferiority. It may be inferiority of our knowledge or power, as in the art of a semi-savage nation; or restraint by reason of material, as in the way the glass painter should restrict himself to transparent hue, and a sculptor deny himself the eyelash and the film of flowing hair, which he cannot cut in marble. But, in all cases whatever, right conventionalism is either a wise acceptance of an inferior place, or a noble display of power under accepted limitation; it is not an improvement of natural form into something better or purer than Nature herself.

‘Now this great and most precious principle may be compromised in two quite opposite ways. It is compromised on one side, when men suppose that the degradation of the natural form which fits it for some subordinate place is an improvement of it; and that a black profile on a red ground, because it is proper for a water-jug, is therefore an idealisation of humanity, and nobler art than a picture by Titian. And it is compromised equally gravely on the opposite side, when men refuse to submit to the limitation of material and the fitnesses of office; when they try to produce finished pictures in coloured glass, or substitute the inconsiderate imitation of natural objects for the perfectness of adapted and disciplined design.’

These remarks, although general, are suggested by the consideration of stone carving proper to Gothic work, the



work in architecture we moderns really care most about ; but there is another element, one not mentioned here, but which determines the necessity for strict conventional treatment in very many applications of ornament—and that is symmetry. The propriety of symmetry in the majority of applications of ornament to manufactures is certain. From the dawn of art in every country of the world it is visible as the first desire of the human mind in decoration, a desire inherent and constitutional, and founded on nature, throughout all whose works the attempt to be symmetrical is the formal law of organisation.

In speaking of beauty, I shall attempt to say nothing on symmetry. But after all, *can* we not improve nature as it commonly presents itself? If we could not, the artist's occupation would be gone ; and not the artist's only, but the theologian's, the lawgiver's, and the physician's. Of late our poets—all of them, but especially Wordsworth and Shelley, our greatest—have spoken of nature like Pantheists, or worshippers of external forces, influences, and beauties. Our taste for landscape is another form of the same thing. But the soul is superior to the body, mind to matter, our longings and aspirations superior to any circumstances, and our sense of possible beauty greater than the real. We select, rearrange, harmonise, and combine ; if we are not to do so, the functions of the intellectual man, and especially of the artist, are paralysed. If we are not to improve a rose, as rose, we are to select the best from the attempts of nature to produce a perfect rose, and we are to enhance it by placing a lily and a pansy beside it. Our religion goes much further in proclaiming our superiority to nature ; it tells us that a curse is upon the world, that a blight from the pit pervades it, making it exist only in the strife of opposing forces, all organised life preying



upon itself; and we are assured of a time when evil passions and deformities shall cease, the poison tree be rooted up, and the lion lie down with the lamb. Are we not every day trying to realise something of this in and for ourselves by self-culture and prayer, uttered or not uttered, the desire for light and the determination to do well?

The Greeks, who had no theology, and speaking in our sense no religion, but only a mythology or fable-book, founded on an idolising of nature, its forces, influences, and beauties, were nevertheless haunted by this necessity of in some way formalising the perfect; and they found it in art, in *THE IDEAL*.

Students who are employed very much on drawing from the antique in our Schools of Art, first from acanthus foliage, and afterwards from the statue (in England we draw a great deal more from casts than they do in France, perhaps too much), are led to inquire into the ideal, what and why it is; questions not easy to answer. In speaking of the Italian Schools of Painting, I pointed out how the revival rose out of the conventional Greek, and retained an ideal rather than a realistic and portrait character, all through the purism of the 1300, the dramatic development of the 1400, and the executive powers of the 1500, down even through the academic and machinist times. At that late day only, we hear of a schism, the movers in which called themselves 'Naturalists.' North of the Alps again, in the works of the Germanic races, we found an exclusively portrait character, much more touching and instructive for the most part, but literal and dry, till the rage for imitating the Italians made them, not ideal, but simply unnatural.

This Italian endeavour after the realisation of ideal excellences, though it set before the artist quite other motives

than the direct and simple imitation of nature, was entirely different from that of Greek sculpture. The ideal of ancient sculpture was the natural man approaching to the gods by the perfection of body. But it does not touch us, it scarcely interests; we know moral goodness and intellectual greatness to be often inhabitants of mean and even ugly bodies. If, by a paganish love of the body, or a peculiar cultivation, we apprehend and feel fully the beauty of the antique, we are in danger of sharing the infatuation of Pygmalion, or of losing our reason; of being lost in the admiration, amounting to worship, expressed by Winckelmann of the 'Apollo,' or dying before him in the hopeless love exhibited by the girl of Provence, who daily threw a veil over the statue, and sat before it oblivious of the world and herself. The sculpture of the ancients, although it contributed to the revival, was not so authoritative to the great Italian artists as it has been since; forming the school of the Carracci (the Academics) in a great measure, and the French school of the Revolution. Michelangelo, whose ideal was the embodiment of intellectual energy, appears to have been by no means overawed by the antique, as the anecdotes regarding him show that he admired the works of Ghiberti and others more than the ancient remains, and that he sneered at the antiquarian spirit then beginning among the cognoscenti. He was present at the exhumation of the Laocöon, but in the record of the circumstance in a private letter there is no hint of emotion or enthusiasm on his part, at the first sight of this, one of the grandest antiquities, and the one most akin in externals to his own style.\*

\* In a letter from Francesco di San Gallo, quoted by Fea, 'Notizie intorno Raffaele.' 'We went (the writer, his father, and Michelangelo), and descended to the statues. My father immediately said, "This is the Laocöon of which Pliny makes mention."

We may, therefore, with advantage, separate our remarks into two heads; taking first, THE IDEAL, *pur excellence*, of the Greeks, which may be at once defined as the representation of bodily perfection; and second, other ideal treatment, whether resulting from mental conceptions of beauty, or from epic or theologic motives inspiring or requiring an abstract treatment on the part of the artist.

Let me first remark, however, that the different acceptations of the word, as used colloquially and unconnected with art, have carried confusion into the subject. It is thus often applied to mean the immaterial, as if it ought never to signify either bodies or their true images. Anything chimerical, or invented by whim or fancy, is loosely said to be 'quite ideal.' Others again, who reject the word, and ignore it in the history or practice of art, still habitually sanction it when applied to the beautiful. Everyone speaks in a slip-slop way of ideal beauty—*le beau idéal*.

The explanation of the substantive word Idea, will assist in leading us to the meaning of our term, and *idea* signifies nothing else than *image*. Some metaphysicians have proposed to determine the difference between idea and image, by applying the former to objects seen in the mind, the latter to those imprinted on the corporeal organ. Thus, the impression on the eye of a burning candle is an image; the mental impression of the light and its cause is an idea. *The idea is the image in the mind*, according to our powers of observing and understanding.

Supposing the same fact to be witnessed and related by

The cavity was enlarged with a view to extract the group; which seen, we returned to dinner.' See *Quarterly Review*, vol. 103, article on Michelangelo, p. 463, for some remarks on the antique in relation to Michelangelo.



two persons of different degrees of intelligence, it is scarcely possible to overrate the possible difference between the two narratives. And this, because the stupid witness sees nothing but the isolated matters-of-fact on the surface, while the other penetrates into expression, divines motives, sees the progress of the action, and so describes it that he addresses our understanding as well as sympathies, and enlarges our interest. Truth will belong to both. The truth of the matter-of-fact witness is very likely the most trustworthy because he goes no further than the narration of what his senses proved to him; but his truth is limited and barren, only good to substantiate some other evidence. Strictly speaking, there must be idea in every work of art; yet we say 'it is without idea,' and 'the artist is destitute of ideas,' when the impressions or suggestions it communicates are strictly confined to the objects represented. On the other hand, we say 'a person is rich in ideas, a work abounds in ideas, a design is full of ideas,' when person, work, and design are remarkable for the mental and moral power displayed in them.

Idea being the mental image, the term ideal, therefore, applied to works of imitation designates their derivation from the mental image as presented to the painter by judgment and imagination; whatever, indeed, is composed, formed, and executed by virtue of that faculty in man which enables him to conceive, and realise what he has conceived, thus producing a whole such as had never been presented to his eye, but which answers to his desire.

I regret to have to talk so metaphysically, but I am really using the simplest form of explanation, taking advantage of the aid of Quatremère de Quincy to enable me to do so. I shall spare you the long disquisitions on the



opposite notions of *individuality* and *generality*, nor shall we trouble ourselves with the essential and non-essential in things; subjects of considerable interest to the methodical reasoner, however repulsive and barren to the creative artist.

Looking about us in any assemblage of people, we see every one marked off by his own distinct characteristics. One has a short round face, the shapes of the features conforming with the general shape; another a long profile, the nose and other features higher and more pronounced, and so on; with the body and its members it is the same: and, besides this, accidental or constitutional defects attract our attention. Mental peculiarities show themselves also, both in the form and expression, as the motives in every movement. Amidst all this diversity in ordinary life, we like or dislike, according to our own affinities or repulsions with those we meet; but it does not appear there is an infallible guide in the external aspects of individuals to our sympathetic admiration. Beauty is the great attraction, and may exist irrespective of corresponding mental excellence, drawing us towards it even against our will, at least in the opposite sexes. We ourselves being like the rest individuals with inherited or imbibed characters, we *sympathise* with those others who resemble or contrast with ourselves, irrespectively of any supposed perfectness of form, or even of beauty; although we *admire* all lovely forms and countenances, and, generally speaking, acknowledge their existence with considerable unanimity.

Such being the case, you will perceive that the ideal or the perfect form is not to be found in nature; and that, while it is the most wonderful creation in the realm of art, it is an intellectual one that may affect us but little, even while we admire it. It will be found also that this ideal

of the Greeks is not spiritual but material, not emotional but simply beautiful; and that it consists in elevating the human passionate nature into a quiescent lordliness, and, in a practical point of view, that it is the result of proportion. This proportion was apparently an instinct with the Greeks. It insured nobleness to the commonest production; and in their great works it has realised what Plato spoke of as the antitypal form, the bodily perfection of manhood and womanhood, the gods and goddesses of mythology.

This proportion, or sense of the true central shape and relative size of the parts of the human figure, seems to have belonged to Greek art from the earliest time, and even to the Egyptian. It seems to have been gradually carried out in the finest works without any particular artist demonstrating it, lecturing about it, or indeed thinking it noticeable in any way, much less claiming it as his patent. Nor have the critics and commentators made out very distinct canons whereby it may be regulated. Among painters, Leonardo da Vinci and Albert Dürer have written on proportion, showing that a man standing with the arms extended touches a perfect square, and other curious observations. Winckelmann, Lessing, and Quatremère de Quincy, have written learnedly on the ideal; and Vitruvius has made some remarks upon the subject in connection with his art. The ordinary division of the figure is into eight heads; and it has been observed that the Corinthian column, which came into use after the arts had attained their highest development, corresponds exactly with the human figure in this division, the shaft and base-moulding being seven capitals in height.

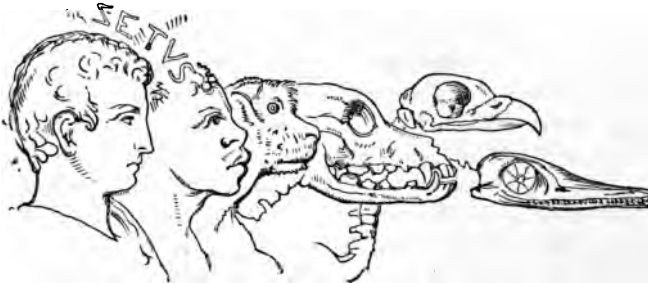
Even the proportions of our best-known statues have not been satisfactorily settled; but the result of all that

has been said seems to be the establishment of many standards according to the nature of the impersonation or divinity represented. We must always bear in mind that the Pantheon was, to a great extent, a collection of types, embodiments of qualities and attributes of nature in the human form. Thus the proportions of the 'Venus de' Medici,' which is the representation of the feminine, the maternal instinct in virginity, are not the same as those of the 'Venus of Milo' (as it is called, having been found in the Island of Milos), which is 'Venus victorious over Mars,' woman triumphing in her beauty. Nor do I think it advisable on the whole to give any of the schemes of measurement, but rather to recommend you to cultivate good drawing by unfettered observation and feeling.

That part of the antique form wherein the ideal has most distinctly established a standard of its own is the head and face. The general form of the head and size of brain, the geometrical character of the features, and the perpendicularity of the profile, are all regulated and predetermined on principle. And here comparative anatomy has shown us the profundity of the ancients in originating a law, afterwards confirmed by science. Throughout creation the development of the organs of sense furnishes a rule for the separation of the kingdoms of organic life; and if we begin at the fish, in which all the senses are first found, the degree of elevation of these organs above each other, and in relation to the brain, will be found very truly to indicate the degree of intellect in the animal.

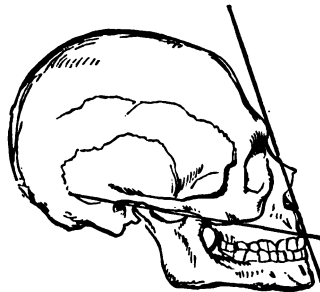
Here is a sketch of the profile of the ichthyosaurus, a bird, a dog, a monkey, a negro, and a late Greek antique, by which it will be seen that the facial angle, beginning very acute indeed, so that both lines run very horizontally, rises into a perpendicular in the ideal.

Professor Camper's mode of calculating the facial angle was by passing a right line down the face, touching the



Profile in Comparative Anatomy.

highest points of the skull and upper jaw ; the line drawn from the lower of these points (the edge of the upper jaw



at the setting of the teeth) through the auricle orifice in the temporal bone giving the measure of the angle.



By this measurement the

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Oran-outan was found about | 30°—35°, |
| Negro family               | „ 70°,   |
| Mongolian family           | „ 80°,   |
| Caucasian family           | „ 85°,   |
| Ideal Greek                | „ 100°,  |

the most extreme of the ancient statues carrying the profile line even over the perpendicular.\*

Now it will be evident that this scientific criterion, while it established one rational form, deprived the artist of all the varieties that delight as well as perplex us in nature. A typical form being established, it followed that a typical or just expression was properly its accompaniment. Thus the manifestation of passion on the ideal figure is inadmissible; the form must be pervaded by the calm pertaining to the divine intellect, as expressed by the ideal form. The passion is to be there, but it is under command; the normal character prevails.

Take the 'Apollo Belvedere,' which we all know, and read the description of it in Winckelmann. 'The "Apollo" of the Vatican offers us that god in a movement of indignation against the serpent Python, which he has just killed with arrow-shots, and in a sentiment of contempt for a victory so little worthy of a divinity. The wise artist who proposed to represent the most beautiful of the gods placed the anger in the nose, which according to the

\* 'That face is beautiful whose nose runs parallel to the spine. No human face has grown into this estate. The average facial angle is, as is well known, 80°. What until now no one has remarked, the old artists felt through inspiration. They have not only made the facial angle a right angle, but have even stepped beyond this, the Romans going up to 96°, the Greeks to 100°.'—*Oken's Physiology*.

ancients, was its seat, and the disdain on the lips. He expressed the anger by the inflation of the nostrils, and the disdain by the elevation of the under lip, which causes the same movement in the chin. Penetrated with a conviction of his power, and lost in a concentrated joy, his august look penetrates far into the infinite, and is extended far beyond his victory. Disdain sits on his lips and ascends to his eyebrows; but an unchangeable serenity is painted on his brow, and his eye is full of sweetness, as though the Muses were caressing him. The forehead is the forehead of Jupiter, the eyebrows announce the supreme will, the large eyes are those of the queen of the gods orbbed with dignity, and the mouth is an image of that of Bacchus, where breathed voluptuousness.\*

Here we have many and opposite qualities and expressions visible to the intelligent eye, although neutralising each other, and producing as a whole self-command, or rather self-complacency, amounting to quiescence. The ideal face has been consequently misunderstood, or misinterpreted, at the same time that the scientifically intellectual form that exhibits it has met with the most opposite

\* The continuation of this passage is so beautiful it ought to be added: 'At the sight of this marvel of art my mind takes a supernatural disposition, fitted to judge of it with dignity. From admiration I pass to ecstasy; I feel my breast dilating and rising, like those who are filled with the spirit of prophecy. I am transported to Delos and the sacred groves of Lycia, places Apollo honoured with his presence; the statue seems to be animated with the beauty that sprung of old from the hands of Pygmalion. How can I describe thee, O inimitable master-piece? For this it would be necessary that art itself should deign to inspire my pen. The traits that I have sketched I lay before thee, as those who came to crown the gods put their crowns at their feet, not being able to reach their heads.'

criticism. Oken called it, in the depth of his admiration, a revelation from heaven; while the empirical and amiable Lavater, less exact, disdaining comparative anatomy and common sense at once, asserts that 'the nearer the approach to the perpendicular, the less is the form characteristic of wisdom or grace; the higher the character of worth and greatness, the more obliquely certain lines retreat. In the usual copies of these famous ancient lines of beauty, I find generally the expression of meanness and, if I dare say so, of vague insipidity.' This last he might find, not the first. Again: 'I will never more pronounce the words: Truth, Nature, if such living profile could be found; or, if found, if the person who possessed it were not the most blockishly stupid.' But such a judgment as this is one pronounced without the understanding of any of the conditions necessary to a right estimate; nevertheless, it is interesting as a verdict from a modern physiognomical point of view.

Such, then, was the highest form created by the greatest artistic people the world has ever seen, under the influence of Pantheism. In the same art were other typical representations not beautiful, those that expressed animal natures and merely physical appetites. The nymphs, who embodied inanimate portions of creation, as the woods and streams, were lovely; but the fauns and satyrs had a distinct standard, and one analogous, certainly, to the ideal of human-divine being, but expressive of only the passions and brute qualities supposed to dwell with the wildness of unreclaimed nature. But these I shall not touch upon.

The abolition of the Pantheon and the decline of all the arts took place co-ordinately as to time, but not necessarily as results of the same cause. We have seen the struggles of Christianity to preserve sculptured images in connection



with religion producing a certain restricted and formalised art in the Byzantine. When the revival began, the restrictions were too feeble to prevent a recurrence to nature in the early Italian artists; and in those of the thirteenth century, when art was exclusively in the service of religion, and therefore employed on divine or canonised impersonations, the Christian ideal of moral goodness and religious faith originated the purism which is so lovely and gracious in the works of the time. Still the tendency was to the study of nature, as the proper schooling for the painter; and we find one artist after another widening the field by dramatic truth and still-life imitation.

In treating religious subjects and sacred characters, each painter tried to express the best idea he was able to conceive of the superhuman and beatified; but, to say the truth, the realisation becomes very low and base indeed in the hands of the later masters, such as Tintoretto and others, with a natural bias to the dramatic, and an exclusive sympathy with the physical. In the practice of Raphael all previously done may be said to have culminated. His intellect absorbed the past art, and gave it back upon his canvas as a lovely naturalism. His Madonna groups are not representations of the queen of heaven in mediæval jewelled copes, but of the purest and most loving of earthly mothers, sometimes rising into a mystical and even awful loveliness, as in the 'Madonna di San Sisto.' They give us the Blessed Virgin as a woman, as she must have been, holding and guiding the infantine limbs of the little human creature wherein God was incarnated. She is the sweetest type of all our mothers, and not spiritualised too far to cease being to all men the realisation not of antique but of Christian maternity.

Some of these Raphael painted from nature, but doubt-



less he inspired the copy from the model with his own sentiment. There is a passage in one of his letters often quoted, wherein he describes his method of painting, and speaks of an *ideal* in his mind. He says to Count Baldassare Castiglione, in a complimentary way, 'To paint a beautiful woman, I must see several, with this condition, that your lordship be near me to select the loveliest. But, there being a dearth both of good judges and of beautiful women, I make use of a certain idea that comes into my mind.\* Whether with benefit to art I know not, but I strive to form such an ideal in my mind.'

After a little time the antique was more studied, and the school of the Carracci established, who were much more confident than Raphael, and expressed no doubts. Concerning the practice of Guido, whom few now look upon with the same admiration he received a century ago, we have several records. One especially is curious and instructive. Guercino, who thought Guido had a beautiful model whom he kept all to himself, prompted a Bolognese nobleman, a friend of both, to get the name of the supposed beauty out of him. Guido saw what his visitor was after, and offered to show him this lovely model. So he called his colour-grinder, a great greasy fellow with a very brutal character of head, and bade him sit down and look up to the sky; then, taking his chalk, he drew a Magdalen in the same attitude and light and shade, but 'as handsome as an angel.' The Count thought it was done by enchantment. 'No,' said Guido; 'but tell your painter that the beautiful and pure idea must be in the head, and then it is no matter what the model is.'

This was well said, but not well done. The beautiful

\* 'Ma, essendo carestia e di buoni giudici e di belle donne, mi servo di una certa idea che mi viene in mente.'—*Lett. Pittor.*, tom. i. p. 84.

and pure mind will paint purely and beautifully, executive dexterity permitting; but in the manner of working indicated by the anecdote we see the foolhardy repudiation of truth that produced the mannerism so palpable in all his works. If Raphael was not sure that he was right, or that he was benefiting art by following an ideal or an image in the mind, who then shall dare to trust to it?

## LECTURE XVIII.

## TERMS IN ART.

PICTURESQUE, ETC.—CHIARO-SCURO, ETC.—STYLE, ETC.

THE term PICTURESQUE, with its correlatives, SCULPTURESQUE, GROTESQUE, is one which has been in use little more than two centuries, Italian in origin, and easily enough explained; at least the definition of the word is quite within reach, although it is not quite so easy to say *why* this or the other thing or appearance is picturesque.

When we say any scene or object is picturesque, we mean literally that it is picture-like or fit for a picture; that it possesses those conditions of aspect that qualify it to be striking or pleasing under the treatment of the painter's art.

This signification being a general one, it may be supposed that it ought to include and be applicable to the materials of all pictures, of lofty as well as humble subjects, sacred and profane history as well as landscape. This, however, is not the case; it is restricted to landscape, genre, and romantic matters, and the history of the word explains its limitation.\* When Annibale Carracci applied himself to

\* Professor Blackie, of Edinburgh, in his discourses on Beauty, note on p. 155, speaks as if the term picturesque at first comprehended all the elements fit for great pictures as well as familiar

scenic painting, and was followed by more professed landscape painters, such as Salvator Rosa, a new treatment arose; the Naturalisti also introduced rough, wild character for its own sake, in which beauty or abstract sentiment of any description was not found, but which was exceedingly striking and interesting, and this word picturesque was invented, which admirably describes the new treatment. The picturesque belongs only to the beautiful by contrast. The pleasure it gives is not so much a natural as an artificial or simply artistic one; it is only when painted that we learn to admire those conditions of nature that are picturesque. Lord Lindsay says: 'In art it answers to the romantic in poetry: both stand opposed to the classic or formal school; both may be defined as the triumph of nature over art (*i. e.* symmetrically regulated form), luxuriating in the decay, not of her elemental and everlasting beauty, but of the bonds by which she had been enthralled by man.'

An antique temple in its prime, on a wide paved plain, showing white against the sky, with its massive line of Doric columns laden with the broad entablature, bearing its regular succession of bronze shields and metopes with painted grounds, the fine angle of the tympanum sloping into the sky to the exact centre of the entire form, was grand and beautiful. The same structure in ruin, the continuity of the columns gone, the lines everywhere shaken, the angles of the tympanum bent, and the apex fallen, surrounded by shattered sculpture and masses of masonry, is picturesque. If in addition, instead of sunshine and long-draped Athenians, we suppose a thundercloud forming its ones, and had by degrees in some unexplained manner been restricted. This is disproved by the history of the word, which is a coinage of late times.



background, the shadowed walls lit up fitfully, and homeless banditti flying for shelter on their frightened horses, the scene becomes more and more picturesque.

Whatever we would consider undesirable as a personal adjunct or condition, that is what the picturesque painter for the most part covets for his canvas. Wild and gaunt features as well as artless and contented expression, dishevelled tresses or elf-locks, tattered garments, he prefers; beggary is the most picturesque condition of social life. The terrier is more picturesque than the pointer, the Shetland pony than the Arab horse. And the same with action: those positions that give most variety of aspect and are most transitional, as leaning forward, stooping on one knee, falling or rising, are more picturesque than walking, sitting, or standing, however elegantly.

But it is more particularly to landscape that the term belongs, and to figures in landscape; and in considering ancient sculpture and architecture you must bear in mind the ancients had no landscape, and no art of any kind pursuing the picturesque as its motive. They could not have conceived how tumbling-down cottages with fences falling to pieces, rocky precipices, tangled and black labyrinths of forest, or pinnacled buildings of the Gothic kind, could give gratification to the artistic sense. They did not admire in pictures or sculpture what they would avoid or rectify in actual life. We moderns have learned to do that and a great many other cunning things. I have heard a lady say she wished they would not do away with climbing boys in the north of England, they were 'so picturesque—dear little wretches!' And this is only an extreme expression of what we all feel. We must have the floors of our rooms flat that we should not trip ourselves up between the boards or stones; our ceilings clean and white that they may

reflect the light upon us, the walls smooth and bright with paper or paint; but we object to all this on canvas, and there is something so attractive and seductive in this we call the picturesque, that it alone seems to inspire all the young would-be artists with the determination to follow it. Indeed they recognise it alone as art.

As it was with the ancients, so with the middle ages. The illuminators, the architects, the painters of the 1300 and 1400 never recognised the picturesque, nor endeavoured to express it in their work. On the contrary the trim garden makes a considerable figure in mediæval poetry and illumination; but the mountain gorge, gully, forest, stream, never. The masters of the great middle period had not yet perceived it. Bellini never broke up his colours for variety, nor avoided flat walls behind his figures; Masaccio did not cultivate it; nor did it ever enter into the head of Angelico to make the background of the 'Annunciation' a varied landscape shaded with vines or other seductive objects. Landscape-painting itself, as I have said, had no existence till comparatively late days. If time allowed me to do so, I might illustrate the subject by comparing quaint old Thomas Tusser's 'Husbandry' with Thomson's 'Seasons: ' one describing country things, sowing, reaping, and keeping of Yule, with hearty feeling, intimate fellowship with his materials, vivid pictures, and warning grumbles; the other full of vague declamatory composition. But I prefer to read to you some pertinent remarks on the scenery of the Highlands by Lord Macaulay. He considers that the delight in scenery is an artificial taste, that it can only be enjoyed by the idle and secure, and tells us that Captain Burt, about 1730, was one of the first Englishmen who caught a glimpse of the spots which now allure tourists from every part of the civilised world, and that he wrote

an account of his wanderings. 'He was evidently a man of a quick, an observant, and a cultivated mind, and would doubtless, had he lived in our age, have looked with mingled awe and delight on the mountains of Inverness-shire. But, writing with the feeling universal in his own day, he pronounced these mountains monstrous excrescences. Their deformity, he said, was such that the most sterile plains were lovely in comparison. Fine weather, he complained, only made bad worse; for the clearer the day the more disagreeably did these misshapen masses of gloomy brown and dirty purple affect the eye. What a contrast, he exclaims, between these horrible prospects and the beauty of Richmond Hill! Some people may think that Burt was a man of vulgar and prosaic mind, but they will scarcely venture to pass a similar judgment on Oliver Goldsmith. Goldsmith was one of the few Saxons who more than a century ago ventured to explore the Highlands. He was disgusted by the hideous wilderness, and declared that he greatly preferred the charming country round Leyden, the expanses of verdant meadow, the villas with their statues and grottoes, trim flower-beds, and rectilinear avenues. Yet it is difficult to believe the author of the "Traveller" and the "Deserted Village" was naturally inferior in taste and sensibility to the thousands of clerks and milliners who are now thrown into raptures by the sight of Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond.'

Salvator Rosa was a master of the wild picturesque, but the Dutch first made us familiar with its humbler forms. Their love of strongly pronounced indigenous character and still-life imitation led them to low and rustic subjects and to village and country; and the tremendously powerful light-and-shadow of Rembrandt was itself eminently picturesque. But still their picturesque was different from



ours. They were more truthful than our landscape-painters hitherto have been, and they did not depart from the facts of the scenes before them. Those painters of the Dutch school who worked directly for a picturesque end are the later ones; and it is difficult to point to anything more useless, in a civilising point of view, than some of their works, although in surface execution they are charming.

With Gainsborough and Wilson, artistic arrangement regulated by a sense of the picturesque was the motive in landscape; and the earlier works of Turner resemble them. Afterwards he studied more specifically; but, judging from his sketches, and allowing for his marvellous rapidity, perhaps it is not too much to assert he never in his life spent more than two hours upon any mere study from nature direct. In Turner's best day, Sir Walter Scott brought romantic scenery into fashion, and the painter became an illustrator of localities. These he realised and informed as no man had ever done before, and at the same time exaggerated, displaced, and intensified, filling his canvas or the page of the engraver with hundreds of incidents treasured by his quick and sure observation, treated according to his ideas of splendour or romance, or introduced by the merely artistic requirements of composition. For example, his Scotch scenes, Edinburgh High Street or Borthwick in the Lothians, he peopled with kilted figures, seeing they pleased the southern and ignorant eye, although untrue, at the same time enlarging the hills into mountains and the streams into torrents. This treatment, 'making the shows of things answer the desires of the mind,' is productive of the most gracious results in the hands of genius. Even without genius, and where the intention is only to please for the moment, it produces the most piquant contrasts, in theatrical matters for example. There the vivandière, who,



you may imagine, has got the feminine graces pretty well polished off in barrack life, comes out trippingly in white silk stockings and bashful coquetry. The French novel and romance too do tolerably well in dispensing with the trammels of truthful delineation, the debauched and depraved retaining their souls unspotted in an enchanting manner!

The principle adopted by Turner in landscape, and carried out with blind genius and fatal success, landed him in a curious kind of apotheosis at last. He made pictures mere agglomerations of broken colours glorious to behold whether upside down or not. He would paint the 'Casting of the Iron Duke,' there being much talk about the statue to be raised to Wellington. You know in such castings the mould is sunk in sand, and a gutter is formed for the melting mass of metal to flow out of the furnace steadily down between mould and core, fortunate if no earthquake supervene. Well, a hidden mould would not make a picture, but the aged painter covered his canvas with crimson and gold, furnace glow and smoke, and in the midst of this stood the statue ready cast; bits of green and blue, complementary colours to red, were wanted, and he littered down in the corner of the picture the contents of a cabbage stall!\*

If the means be put in place of the end in art, as in other things we deal with in life, or if a part is mistaken for the whole, the result must be altogether wrong. But we must not consider the picturesque from an exclusive point of view. Although it is opposed to the classic ideal, and to the various ideals of early artists, it is really the

\* This picture actually exists, and is the property of the nation! It remains, however, judiciously concealed in the shades below, not shown in the Gallery above.

best pictorial treatment of whatever the painter handles. If you choose to resort to books on the subject, you will find plenty of arguments to prove it to be one form, and the most engaging one, of beauty. But on the whole these books are so argumentative, and written with such loose notions of art, that there is not much good in them for us. For instance, it is said : A smooth lawn, a uniform surface of rich verdure, is beautiful to the living eye, exciting lively pleasurable emotions, but is an object quite unfit for a picture, where it conveys no pleasure. But how many mistakes are there in this sentence ! A piece of pure green, a green lawn or green velvet, may give us lively pleasurable visual sensation without being beautiful. If a lawn of smooth grass is intrinsically beautiful—whether it is or not I do not venture to say—it will be beautiful in representation ; if it has a basket of flowers lying on it, and if cloud-shadows are passing over it, it will be still more beautiful, and this is what the picturesque treatment would do for it. I may boldly affirm that a picture of anything whatever, animate or inanimate, if thoroughly well done, will convey precisely the same emotion as the original, more or less faintly or vividly according to the completeness of the imitation, completeness to the mind as well as to the eye.

A perfect Greek temple has been given as an example of beauty, its ruin of the picturesque. But the picturesque treatment is applicable to the representation of the perfect as well as the ruined temple. What is the best pictorial realisation of the unruined Parthenon ? Not an elevation clearly, but a perspective from a certain distance, where the diminution of the retiring colonnade gives most variety, where light and shade give it most depth and elevation, where distance and sky give its white marble most purity.

The beauty of the picturesque is beauty of aspect ; and undoubtedly the materials most fitted for the painter are those that already present in themselves those varieties and contrasts most valued by the eye. A new wall, being an expanse of one colour, gives us no pleasure ; but in its old age, its weather-stains, curious mosses and lichens, minute crimson things, encrusted whitenesses, and little black caverns, are all elements of the picturesque, and certainly also of the beautiful.

SCULPTURESQUE.—After the explanation of the more commonly used and more disputed analogous word, the term Sculpturesque will not require much discussion. What the picturesque is to painting, sculpturesque is precisely to sculpture.

The sculptor who does not paint his works—and perhaps we may say at once no one worthy of the name ever will henceforth—is debarred from the full and complete imitation of the painter. He *must* be abstract in one respect ; and, being so in the singleness of his surface, he has always aspired to be so also in the other element at his command, that of form. For this reason the ideal of the antique has always continued very authoritative with him. The intrinsically beautiful, however, is his worship, not the conventionally nor the symmetrically ideal—the intrinsically beautiful in form. Now whatever can be done better by any other art is best left to that mode of expression. Costume of all sorts, with its diversity of material, cloth, leather, fur, and so forth, is more fully represented in colour than in marble, bronze, or wood. Distance cannot be given in round or on flat solid surfaces without perspective, therefore it also is unsculpturesque ; and the best bas-reliefs confine themselves to a single plane. To com-



pensate for this the Greeks used a representative or typical form of conveying ideas—a single house or a gateway standing for a town or city. But in later sculpture the sphere of the artist was widened considerably, at the same time that the typical treatment fell out of harmony with prevailing habits of thought. The Gothic artists of the great cathedrals of France found the art powerful and wide enough to express themselves fully thereby. Ghiberti dared to employ retiring degrees of distance, with the figures diminishing, and behind them trees and temples. Still the truly sculpturesque is that which most fully expresses its dramatic subject and its sentiment by figures alone, or in bas-relief by figures and limited background, representing no more than one degree of distance.

There is another term belonging to the same family, of which I may say something—the GROTESQUE. This word has now an entirely different meaning from that which it first possessed.

In ancient Rome the baths were among the most important public institutions; immense in extent, they were the galleries wherein some of the finest works in sculpture and painting were deposited. In the wreck and ruin of the ancient city many of their chambers were covered up by débris, and when they were again laid bare these works were brought to light. In the baths of Caracalla, the 'Farnese Hercules,' so called because the Farnese family became its possessors, the 'Flora,' the 'Two Gladiators,' the 'Venus Callipyge,' and others, were found; among the ruins of the Baths of Constantine the two colossal horses and men (Castor and Pollux they have been called), now on the Monte Cavallo in Rome, were discovered; and in those of Titus the most perfect ancient picture now existing, the



'Aldobrandini Marriage,' was preserved to us, besides several chambers nearly entire, covered with decorations, inexhaustible in facility of design, wherein birds and animals, foliage and fruit, masks and groups of all sorts of objects, were painted running down the pilasters and over the walls and roofs.

These were disclosed to the world at the time when the Vatican decorations afforded an opportunity for their direct and immediate imitation. The admiration they excited was immense; and a 'pagan pope,' with Raphael's staff of workmen at his command, immediately adopted their style in the Loggie, since so well known. This style—so new, so heterogeneous, having no meaning, no sentiment, and, properly speaking, no beauty, because entirely wanting in harmony and propriety—was called the Grotesque, the originals having come from the 'grotta' or underground chamber in these baths.

You know what these decorations are like. In the earlier and ignorant days of these schools of art, we were required to imitate them! You have perhaps the base of a candelabrum painted on the pilaster, supporting flower stems on which cupids stand who hold by the tails fishes that twine round a centre rod giving out sprays of foliage; then comes perhaps a badly drawn red or green chimera with two heads and no body; and towards the top of the candelabrum, which, however, is no candelabrum at all, we have masks hanging by ribands, and flowers that are neither natural nor architectural, and so on.

All this, when everything 'classic' was unquestioned, was considered imaginative and fantastic, and by-and-by whatever was imaginative and fantastic got the name of grotesque. Wherever fancy runs into the absurd or rushes into the wild, we now apply the word grotesque. The

great sculptors of the Pointed period of architecture were great in this fantastic exercise of invention, mixing the wildest vagaries with the saddest and deepest meanings. No great ornamentist, nor great artist either, but must rejoice in *their* grotesque.

CHIARO-SCURO.—Of this word Chiaro-scuero, and of the others that follow, I propose to give you rather a definition in as few words as may be consistent with clearness than a critical examination into the things signified. They are all technical; or at least they are specific, and relate to the executive part of our subject.

When Queen Elizabeth sat for her portrait, she would not have the painter put in shadows, and, as she said, disfigure her face with black; she would be painted all in fair colours; she would sit in a garden-light, as it was called. This was a protest on her part against the practice then and since followed of giving additional power by depth of shade behind the head and under the features, and softness of expression by subduing the outlines. The practice of fresco prevented the earlier masters striving after great roundness and depth, but as soon as oil came into use these qualities of *effect* were at once attained. But it was from the hands of the great Venetians, Titian above all, and also from Correggio, that the full diapason of colour harmonised by shade first issued, and to this the term chiaro-scuero has been applied. The word is simply the combination of 'chiaro,' clear, and 'oscuero,' dark; and has given place in our use to the phrase *light and shade*, as applied to the imitation of the appearances of sunshine or dark. In Italy the word has been used to mean *monochrome*: a chiaro-scuero picture is a painting in monochrome as an Italian would say, and nothing more; such is its definition in the dictionary.

But to us the word has a richer meaning, and indicates that shade—darkness itself—has clearness within it; and thus bears upon the treatment of shade, colours being variously affected by the absence of light when we see objects through an obscurity.

That such a meaning may be now found in the word *chiaro-scuro* I have no doubt, but the practice of the Venetian masters carried out no such principle as that of the transparency of darkness by painting thin in the shades. Their shadows are nearly always solidly painted. Rembrandt, who is the greatest technical master of *chiaro-scuro*, perfected the method of painting only with glazing colours (*i.e.* transparent pigments) in the darks, a practice we have seen also recommended by Rubens to his pupils. With Rembrandt darkness was not only visible—it was penetrable; but, further than this, the objects in his darkness seem penetrable also, and herein lies the danger of all simply transparent painting. In some of the small works of lesser Dutch masters, Maas, Terburg, and others, we find this danger avoided by the objects in the shadows being painted firmly and distinctly, yet with admirable retirement and power of light and shade.

While the light or want of it in a picture determines so materially the appearances of things, still every object possesses its native or inherent colour. This is termed *LOCAL COLOUR*. Under all the accidental variations of surface, this ought to be retained, and intelligible. The predominance of this native colour of objects in the early works of all schools gives them a flat and simple character; and the retention of the real colours of objects, which seemed imperative, was evidently the great difficulty in the way of a freer application of shadow. Now we look upon the shadowless aspect of these old works almost as an excellence:



they seem to represent a land where is no night and no sun, but only diffused light, and this adds to their super natural and archaic impressiveness.

In ornamentation the degradation of hue consequent on shadow is not desirable; it is moreover destructive to the integrity of the surface ornamented. Effect in ornament is to be got legitimately by the juxtaposition of deep and bright colours; the local colour of objects is to pervade their entire form. Thus the representation of nature in decoration is rather suggestive than actual.

A few other words or terms I wish to speak of. The first is HIGH ART, which I introduce because of its connection with others to be noticed. One would wish the phrase 'High Art' were dropped out of use, except when used critically and applied to past works more exclusively, as it ought to mean Good Art. But, when so many of our artists who had never before tried anything but a cabinet portrait or a conveniently saleable exhibition-picture began works for the Westminster competition, there was a general use of this term, which brought it into a disrepute we have not yet got over. It was then applied to all historical subjects on a large surface, however small the ideas expressed and however mean the execution. Haydon had lectured much also on the want of patronage for high art, really believing large canvases, and subjects in themselves high and grand, were the essentials to its realisation. Nor is he the latest martyr; David Scott of Edinburgh, an artist wholly unknown in the critical circles of London, with a tremendous power of design and drawing, held the same doctrine, and sacrificed himself very much to it; and others might be mentioned. High art, meaning noble ideas or motives largely and adequately treated, is of course



to be profoundly respected wherever we find it; it is indeed what we should all try to do, whatever be our positions. But unhappily any one can seize hold of a lofty theme and treat it ignobly. The realisation of a great and noble work entirely depends on the nature of the artist, and very little on the subject being of historic consequence or grandeur. The letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive, in this matter as in others.

At the same time it is clear that a noble motive, theme, or subject, is essential to a great picture, and perhaps we may grant that a large field is essential to it. I imagine a noble artist will not be found painting ignoble matters. Cimabue's 'Madonna Enthroned' was hailed, it is said, by the universal populace with delight. Had it been the picture of a baggage-waggon or a 'Free Lance' enjoying his plunder, equally well done, the world would not have been so moved by it. A rhetorical writer says enthusiastically of a picture by Lewis that it will yet be world-celebrated, and that the traveller will come from distant lands for its sake, and returning home say 'I have seen it!' The picture is only an Englishman encamped on Mount Sinai with his dogs and gun, and any such world-wide affection resulting towards it would be a hallucination which, happily for human nature, can never take place. True, it is a curious incident, but not so significant as many others of the same category.

What next marvel time will show  
It is difficult to say;  
Omnibus to Jericho,  
Only sixpence all the way!  
Cabs in Jerusalem may ply,  
'Tis not an unlikely tale,  
And from Dan the tourists hie  
Unto Beersheba by rail.

STYLE has hitherto been considered one of the components of high art; and with it I may couple MANNER in a few remarks, as these words are very frequently applied indiscriminately as if they meant very much the same thing.

In literature, indeed, the word style, derived as it is from the ancient *stylus*, the instrument for writing and drawing, means exactly what we artistically call manner, a word common to several modern languages, indicating much the same thing in all of them—the habit of body and of action, and thus the handling of the artist, the habit of the man in doing his work. His manner is his knack, or peculiar way of executing whatever he has to do. As the masons in the old days had every man his mark, which was scratched on each stone he squared, so every artist has his mark, although involuntarily, and his picture is at once recognisable by his manner. All manner is bad, because it is the result of limited habits. Artistic style, on the other hand, is the form of thought, the way of expressing our thoughts, and indicative of the degree of mental refinement or of the original character. Style rises into stateliness, manner sinks into mannerism. We say naturally enough the grand style, meaning large and simple expression; or we speak of a natural style, meaning that in which there is little peculiarity and much truth: we speak of an ornamental style when the treatment is florid.

Even singularity of execution, if expressive of original thought, would not properly be called manner, but style. The contorted forms of some of the imitators of Michelangelo, although *outré* in the extreme, we would call bad style—we would not say they were mannered; and by this choice of the word style we give an indication of respect for their prototype while we censure the imitations.

Every school has its style; everything in nature has its

style—the mode of development, producing a single impression as the result of the whole plant or animal.

Manner, on the contrary, we find in artificial life; it is an uniformity of performance, which preys upon those who do not continue all their lives students of nature, making them a sort of spiders spinning their own threads. Thus Stothard, if he had had to paint even Satan, would in spite of himself have represented the enemy of mankind as an amiable youth, all his heads being of the same shape and inspired by the same sweetness of expression.

In the history of ornament the word *style* is synonymous with school, because the design and application of decoration are entirely determined by its own laws, not by individual tastes; with manner also it has little to do, because it receives little or no modification from the handling. A school of 'high art,' on the contrary, is the result of the practice and teaching of the masters, the name *caposcuola* (head of a school) being applied to any great master whose characteristics are imitated and perpetuated by his followers. In ornament this is seldom or never the order of things, the ornamentation of a period being the efflorescence of the spirit of the age, its taste in manners and architecture, its tendencies in literature, and its social habits. We in the nineteenth century are reproductive—one man studies one style, another adopts a different one: Owen Jones is as great in the Moresque as Pugin was in the decorated Gothic.

Style is thus in one point of view a noble attribute; it indicates individuality of intellect. Yet it is a dangerous and perishable thing. The later schools valued it most. Beginning with Michelangelo, we find style predominating; in his works the awful energy of his action prevails, whatever the figure represented may be doing; even sleep



is contorted in his hands, and the variety of contour thus engendered characterises every line he drew. The eclectic school of the Carracci made style almost supreme : there is a sonnet by Agostino Carracci, wherein he prescribes the course of study for a painter in his time, 1590 or so, but in which life and nature are never mentioned ; only the executive qualities and points of style of the great deceased masters are to be sought after. This sonnet may be irregularly translated thus :—

Who thirsts to be a painter, let him hold  
 Within his right hand the design of Rome,  
 Venetian shade and motion manifold,  
 And the brave colouring of our Lombard home.  
 Of Michelangelo the terrific way  
 He must explore ; with Titian's natural truth  
 Blending Correggio's pure light of day ;  
 And more, combining Raphael's symmetry  
 With the decorum of Tibaldi's youth,  
 And Primaticcio's invention learn'd,  
 And an ounce of Parmigianino's grace.  
 But if this various labour, this long race,  
 Weary him, if perfection may be earn'd  
 By shorter toil, let every thought be bent  
 On works our Niccolò left ere he went.\*

Many of these excellences they did attain in works of the school so numerous in certain places in Italy ; but no amount of merely technical excellence, no beauties of style, avail to elevate a man to the first rank either in painting or in anything else.

\* This Niccolò dell' Abate died a short time before, with a great reputation. Strange instance of the variableness of fame ! In the sonnet he is placed above all the great masters ; now his position is a long way under the least of them.



## LECTURE XIX.

## ON TASTE AND BEAUTY.

HAVING said something of the Ideal, a consideration of the subject of Beauty seems necessary; in its nature different and more varied, but in its constituents the same as that endeavoured to be presented to us by the ancients as the perfect, the ideal.

At the commencement of our century, the Institute of France offered a prize for the best answer to the question: *What are the causes of the perfection of the antique sculpture, and what would be the best means of attaining it?* The successful competitor, M. Eméric David, maintained the opinion that the assiduous study of natural beauty had alone conducted the antique art to perfection, and that thus the imitation of nature was the only route to carry us again to the same excellence. This position, impregnable, one would say, as a general proposition, was combated by Quatremère de Quincy, who held that the ancients worked out a mental image of perfection not to be found in nature.

Whence, then, came this mental image, save only from the sense of beauty implanted in us by Nature, and towards which Nature herself, as well as the human mind, gravitates and aspires? The world about us is multiform and individual, and throughout its endless variety flows the

beautiful more or less broken and hidden, but tending towards completeness, and in its highest revelations approaching it perhaps more nearly than the ideal of sculpture.

To perceive and to realise this ever present beauty two faculties are wanting—Taste and Genius. Taste is that faculty by which we distinguish whatever is graceful, noble, just, and lovable, in the infinitely varied appearances about us, and in the works of the decorative and imitative arts. The immediate impulse in the presence of beauty is to feel and admire. When the emotion and the sentiment are strong, we are compelled to imitate. We cannot make ourselves more beautiful physically than Providence has decreed, but we wish to see again, to feel again, what caused in us so vivid a pleasure; and we attempt to revive the image that charmed us, to re-create those parts or qualities in the image that we found admirable, with or without those other parts or qualities which did not touch us, but which were necessary to its existence in a conditional and transitory life. Hence a work original and peculiar to man—a work of art. The only power capable of this reproduction is called genius.

What essentially distinguishes genius from taste is the creative power. Taste feels and judges, discusses and analyses, it may be, but does not invent. Genius is, before all, inventive and creative. The man of genius is not the master of the power that is in him; it is proved by the ardent, irresistible need of expressing himself whether anyone is a man of genius. Beauty is his inspiration; it is a sensuous and visible thing residing in form and colour, and nowhere else except figuratively and analogically; and we apprehend and feel it intuitively.

This sense of beauty is, equally with reason, the dis-

tinguishing superiority of the human over every other animal existence; and if we were to talk for ever about it, and endeavour to analyse it into its components, physical and mental, with ever so much acumen, we should at last have to return to an acknowledgment that beauty is simply the beautiful, and that we perceive it because we are so constituted; just in the same way that we cannot prove the truths of geometry or give a reason for their being true, but simply accept them; the whole system of the exact sciences, though certain and immutable as heaven and earth, having no other basis than self-evidence.

Yet it may be useful to inquire into the definitions of thinkers learned in the subject, or, if not directly useful to us as artists, still instructive in a general way.

Perhaps there is no subject that has been more perplexed, and of which more conflicting accounts have been rendered, theories on the subject having occupied so many diverse classes of reasoners. One late writer enumerates the older authorities from Plato down to the later time—'St. Augustin, Crousaz, André, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, and Gérard'—and rejects them all as visionary and wild, because there is no place for the picturesque in their explanatory schemes! To read very much of these or of a thousand other authors on the subject is not to be recommended to any one, much less to artists and artisans; and so I shall try to give you in brief some account of their opinions, premising that the words taste and beauty have been so loosely used that an essay on taste may be found to be an inquiry into beauty, or *vice versa*, and that an inquiry into beauty, which is a property of matter, generally turns out to be no other than an analysis of the mental conditions or moral sentiments to which it corresponds.



The two classes of writers on this vexed subject have been metaphysicians and artists; the first of these, as Berkeley and Hume, finding that beauty is 'no quality in things themselves, but being created in the mind on the reception of the images of things,' and that each mind perceives a different beauty, or a modification of the same. It is asserted that one person may thus discover deformity where another is sensible of loveliness; and that consequently we ought to rest every one in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others. D'Alembert, who applied himself with some effect to the inquiry, was much concerned to come to some conclusion 'whether, in judging a work of taste, sentiment and feeling are to be preferred before reasoning or discussion,' and finds out at last that feeling is the proper arbiter for the first moment, and discussion for the second! Payne Knight, whom some people once held by as an authority, refers taste to the influence of fashion, or other temporary and varying causes. Holding this airy doctrine he felt himself condescending to art, like a gentlemanly creature a little satirical, when he points out how 'every generation accuses its forerunner of bad taste in buildings, furniture, or dress.' When the Elgin Marbles were offered to the nation, he made the mistake to affirm them inferior works.

Alison, a very logical thinker, found that what he described by the term *association of ideas* was everything in matters of taste and art. Burke, in his inquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful, had previously taken a more materialistic view of the question. 'Since,' he says, 'the beautiful is no creature of our reason, since it strikes us without any reference to use, and even where no use at all can be discerned; since the order and method of nature is very different from our



measures and proportions, we must conclude that beauty is, for the most part, some quality in bodies acting mechanically upon the human mind by the action of the senses.' Having thus thrown aside the opposite theories of *Use* and of *Proportion*, the two he has been considering, he proceeds to find beauty in 'smallness, smoothness, gradual variation, delicacy, clean and fair colours of light hue.'

On the other hand, artists had taken some pains to understand the subject, but were considerably overawed by the antique and the ideal, and found beauty to consist only with certain proportions—a very limited notion, as it left out colour. The Greeks were undoubtedly the people most passionately fond of personal beauty of any in history, their admiration extending even to the length of deifying the possessor of it. Philip of Butacides, a man of Crotona, had a temple erected to him by the people of Segesta, in Sicily, for no other reason than that he was the most handsome man of his age; a fact that could only have existed where beauty was a great national inspiring idea. The Greeks appear to have felt the beauty of form with the greatest intensity; colour does not appear to have attracted them with anything like the same love; and sculpture, not painting, was the art wherein they excelled.

Reynolds is the authority for the Proportion theory whose works will most readily fall into your hands, and he holds that the *middle* form, the golden mean in shape and size (which is one way of defining the ideal), in all the different species of animals, is the most beautiful. It is at this the painter or sculptor arrives by rejecting all faulty extremes: the most admirable size of a man is that between a giant and a dwarf, the most beautiful nose the straight one, neither hooked like a bird's nor snubbed like a monkey's. He goes on to say that every time of life, as well as every

animal, has its own medium form, and that this becomes the most beautiful to universal acknowledgment by being the most common.

Hogarth, who had a plain, practical, trenchant intellect, announced his discovery that in the matter of outline, beauty was simply double curves or serpentine lines balancing each other. It was certainly a valuable fact to announce that all ornamentation ever since the earliest time consisted in a great measure of the double curve. After pointing out which artists had a 'fine manner' (meaning a good style, Hogarth being by no means exact in the use of words) and which a bad one, as Correggio for example, whose drawing he avers might be corrected by a common house-painter, he goes on to say that the painters of his own times are not less uncertain or contradictory than those who had gone before. He therefore had a mind to try their intelligence, and tells us: 'In the year 1745 I published a frontispiece to my engraved works, in which I drew a serpentine line lying on a painter's palette, with these words under it, *The Line of Beauty*. The bait soon took, and no Egyptian hieroglyphic ever amused more than it did for a time; painters and sculptors came to me to know the meaning of it, being as much puzzled with it as other people till it came to have some explanation. Then indeed, but not till then, some found it out to be an old acquaintance of theirs, though the account they could give of its properties was very nearly as satisfactory as that which a day labourer who constantly uses the lever could give of that machine as a mechanic power.' This is very well, but, on proceeding further into Hogarth's Analysis, we are disappointed to find him leaving the firm ground, and speculating like other theorists, only leading the way to Burke and others, by finding beauty to consist

in 'principles' six in number, 'Fitness, Variety, Uniformity, Simplicity, Intricacy, and Quantity,' some recognisable by the mind only, others by the eye itself. He is only remarkable where he recurs to the practical again, praising the double curve or ogival line, and showing how constant its use has been in ornamentation.

Partial views of truths announced as complete and comprehensive laws are often worse than errors. Thus the enumeration of qualities the constituents of beauty increased from day to day, *regularity* and *variety* being the two approaching nearest an explanation. But the best thinkers were for *utility* as the cause of our agreeable impressions, classic *proportion* as the means of them, and *undulating curves* as the visible form of them, till the Law of Association was propounded by Alison and rose into greater favour than any other theory. There is a poem by Crabbe, called the 'Lover's Journey,' that appeared shortly after the publication of Alison's essay, admirably illustrating the writer's views. The lover going to visit his beloved traverses a barren heath, a bare common, a salt marsh; but, being enlightened by hopes and pleasant thoughts, he sees all these through a poetic veil: all are beautiful and exhilarating. He finds his mistress gone elsewhere: he is neglected, disappointed, and now the richly wooded lanes he passes through are only weariness to him. At last he finds her, and, returning in the charming and absorbing society of the lady, he sees and cares for nothing else, whether barren heath or woody lanes.

This poetic tale of Crabbe takes in the scope of the Law of Association of Ideas, and also discloses its weakness. Of course the state of mind determines the individual emotion: if we hear a sound overhead and think it thunder, we are awed and impressed; when we learn it is only the



housemaid moving the furniture, the sound entirely ceases to awe or impress. You will observe the salt marsh and the rustic lanes have in themselves something pleasing or displeasing, desirable or undesirable, and to find out what *that* is we must precisely eliminate transient associations of ideas springing from other sources.\*

All this time, and indeed still at the present day, people were and are always ready to fall back on the proverb, quoting it in French or Latin if they wish to appear smart, that 'there is no disputing about taste.' Yet it is very certain there is a law by which we feel the beautiful, unerring as any of the laws of nature; the instinct of the artist tells him so. Some ears are unable to distinguish one tune from another; some eyes to recognise one colour from another. These are simply cases of defective bodily organs, and therefore not for consideration here; but the person who is content to say he knows what pleases himself, and scoffs at the triumphs of art or laughs at their subtleties, is plainly proving himself to be defective either in bodily senses or in mental development.

Taste is no doubt dependent in a great measure on our organisation. Many are born with clear perceptions of what is just, beautiful, and true, in nature; but even these individuals will have to undergo training to see as clearly the corresponding exhibitions in art. If I carry a nosegay in my hand along the street, I observe children almost invariably attracted by it. But, when these children grow up rude and uninformed, a stronger impression is necessary to awaken sensibility. The more they are cultivated, the

\* Further than this, as an illustration of the whole theory, Crabbe's tale is deficient. Woody lanes are not absolutely beautiful but only picturesque, and salt marshes are not absolutely ugly; they also may be picturesque.



finer their impressions. Society as well as individuals gradually reject pomps and splendour of material for the deeper graces of natural treatment and purer art. When a student begins his course he thinks he does great things, and only gradually discovers they are not great when his eye becomes educated. But this is a labour of years, of life indeed. The bodily organ itself does not rightly see till it has been taught. There is a case described by Dr. Carpenter of a blind young man whose sight was cleared by an operation. It was many months after his eyes were well before he could distinguish between the cat and the dog on the hearth-rug: he had to feel their fur, and so resort to his old sense of touch, before he could name them. After a very long period of time had elapsed it was discovered that he had not yet penetrated to the fact that the pictures hanging round the room were likenesses or imitations of other things, but that he viewed them as pretty arrangements of colours and shades, like marbles or patchwork, hung up as curiosities:—

It is the soul that sees: the outward eyes  
Present the object, but the mind describes.\*

The elucidation of principles and the definition of terms largely contribute towards the education of mental and visual sensibility, but not without danger, as D'Alembert might say, of placing reason or discussion in the stead of sentiment or feeling. The sentiment or feeling is what we want, and to develop this a loving acquaintance with nature, a minute intimacy with the parts and the details of

\* Crabbe, said with reference to the Law of Association of Ideas. I find in a poem of my own an attempt to express the same truth:—

‘The eye sees only what the mind perceives.’

parts of individual objects in nature, is most necessary to accompany the exercise of imitation. It is sufficiently proved that on our knowing one language or one science thoroughly well, another language or science is easily acquired; so, in the student's practice, finishing to the utmost one drawing, of some subject really worth doing to begin with, elaborating it completely, is making one sure step after which no difficulty will be insurmountable. Discrimination increases as we proceed, and taste is nothing more than discrimination become an instinct.

Considering beauty, then, as belonging to the body, a condition of appearances that affects us with delight and attracts us towards it, we may find it possible to say something about its elements. The number of its constituents has increased so greatly in the hands of writers viewing it from a mental point of view, that their very number disqualifies them from being of any use or avail as a definition. Also let me notice, the word has been applied in all sorts of ways and to all sorts of things in which it can only have a figurative meaning. Whatever visible thing has in itself a harmony of parts is properly so designated; thus we speak of a beautiful old man or the beauty of infancy. But when we apply the word to things not cognisable by the sense of sight, and say a beautiful voice, a beautiful poem, or even a beautiful odour, we are simply figurative.

This *harmony of parts*, I imagine, we must take for the first and most necessary condition of anything beautiful. Man and woman, and every animal and every object in the vegetable kingdom, have their own beauty, their own completeness and unity; and in art it is this we call 'good composition.' The great head of the lion has the thunder of the mane surrounding it, and the massive knees and paws to

support it; the branching horns of the stag are carried aloft by long and tapering limbs.

If we examine any flower carefully we may learn the most delightful lesson on simplicity and utility of arrangement and 'composition'—to use our technical word—combined with the most complex and numerous members: the daffodil for example, with its central trumpet-shaped petal surrounded by radiating leaves playfully curled. Observe the relation of these parts to each other, and how they unite at the base of the flower, running with a sudden bend into the tall green stem, which is again, but more irregularly, fenced round by the tall green blades. Mark again the general arrangement of the rose with its many leaves seemingly irregular on a bush of many leaves accidentally irregular in general arrangement like the



flower itself. Here is a drawing of the mallow (*grandiflora*) showing the various parts of the flower. What a beautiful thing it is in design, what a wonderful unity with variety! I instance these vegetable forms only because they are limited and easily referred to. God made *man* in His own image, and there is nothing else in the world that can be said to be in the highest sense beautiful.



The second condition that may be safely pointed out as necessary to beauty is *symmetry*. Every living creature is composed of two halves, each the exact counterpart or opposite to the other. The higher the organisation, the more perfectly this law holds, each part to the minutest detail being repeated by the corresponding member. The number of hairs on each side of the head even is nearly the same: nature seems to try to make it exactly so. In the lower province of vegetation again the tendency is the same, but in imperfect development: the entire form of the tree, shrub, or grass, is not symmetrically composed of two halves; but the individual parts retain this division, every leaf being divisible into two equal counterparts. If these halves are not strictly equal to each other, it is owing to some partial and accidental cause; if every tree and shrub is not as a whole symmetrical, it is because nature is thwarted by the innumerable opposing forces, internal and external, which we see evidenced in mountain and stream as well as in tree and shrub, as if there were a tartarean, evil, opposing force, endeavouring to derange the plan, to break in pieces, to make irregular, the appearances as well as the existences of all things. 'That is beautiful,' says Oken, 'which represents the *will* of nature. But non-beautiful is that which represents *real* nature by means of art.'

I may be told that scenery is not symmetrical, that the Gothic architecture is not symmetrical, and yet they are both beautiful. Yes, they have some elements of beauty; they are pleasing, delightful, grand, noble, picturesque—they pretend to no more. But all architecture is the triumph of symmetry; and if a Gothic structure is not as a whole divisible into equals like the Greek, all its parts are in themselves composed of halves. Its ornaments



have the beauties of vegetable nature too ; but, compared to living humanity, the best architecture or scenery hath no form nor comeliness. Architecture is not reproductive or imitative of nature ; on the contrary, it overcomes the law of gravitation by constructive devices : its excellences are mechanical, its beauties geometrical, arising from the arrangement of lines, affecting the eye agreeably or otherwise, simply as lines harmoniously thrown together, masking the construction and visibly securing its firmness and permanence. The eye recognises the beauty of architecture only in these lines, but the mind perceives in it many noble qualities which make it admirable.

In the Gothic we find variety predominating over symmetry ; a series of decorated windows may have the same general shape, but the stone tracery will be different in each of them. But there is the balance of quantities if not a repetition of exact forms. And with regard to the general design of Gothic buildings, I believe in all cases they were intended to be symmetrical, where the art was carried to its highest, as in cathedrals. Very few of these, however, ever got quite finished ; one tower was generally left wanting, or some other feature dropped which would have made its unity visible. This incompleteness even we have now learned to admire.

The difficulty of producing curved lines in stone inspired the mediæval architects with the wish to overcome it, and the flamboyant tracery of many a Continental church and of some at home attests their sense of the charm visible in the curved line. But the mere overcoming of difficulty is not the highest motive in art, and often leaves even a sense of painfulness behind it. The reaction in this country was very strong, and produced the perpendicular.

In all the lower manifestations of art, *variety* is the

greatest charm. In the book called 'Albert Dürer's Prayer-Book,' a book whose margins he had decorated for the Emperor Max, we find a species of ornamentation showing how curved lines simply by themselves, if treated with endless variation, may become supremely fantastic and at the same



Ornament from 'Albert Dürer's Prayer-Book.'

time beautiful. But even these have their symmetry, and perhaps there is no style of ornament in the whole range of history wherein this element is not decisive of its design. The higher the style the more purely symmetrical. Introduce symmetry and you immediately become ornamental. Write for example the name Byron. The figure described by these united letters (p. 358) affects us æsthetically not at all. Double the paper so as to reproduce the word, one half of the figure then becoming the counterpart to the other, you have a design more or less beautiful as the curves may determine. From being amorphous, it becomes organic.

You will have gathered from what has been said that beauty is a very difficult subject for metaphysical inquiry. But, if we venture to say metaphysicians have no business with it, what then? Perhaps to leave it alone is the very best thing they could do for their own credit. One of them has acknowledged that the attempt to define beauty analytically is like the application of the dissecting knife to a fair

cheek. The quality sought for is destroyed by the operation. It belongs to us as artists, and we must show it, not talk of it. It seems to be implanted by God in His creation as the supreme good for the eye, as music is for the ear: both of



(See previous page.)

them intimations of a possible perfect, transcending our reason with its limitations to cause and effect; proving that this earth and this life have in them something of the divine, and that all the ties are not broken that connect us with the Supreme in heaven.

There are forms and colours that are beautiful, as a melody is charming to the other sense, and combinations of these analogous to harmonies in the diatonic scale. The harmonic law so fully and curiously elaborated by the late D. R. Hay, of Edinburgh, is in a great measure an inquiry into the analogical conditions between the two. To give an abstract of his scheme would occupy too much time, but I may indicate its leading feature by saying that he finds symmetry to be the result of, or at least to correspond exactly to, harmonic ratios of numbers, and that geometry is the key to the Palace Beautiful.

These harmonic ratios which doubtless exist in all things, even in chemical combinations; this geometry which goes deeper than we can understand, and contains its own proof within itself; these melodies and this BEAUTY, are all conditions under which we live: the soul awakes to them as to revelations; they bring our entire being into accord. The good, the beautiful, and the true, are but the three forms of the same spirit, dominating in the regions of the moral, the sensuous, and the intellectual, in the same manner. The Beautiful is the apparition of the good and the true in the bodily life about us, wonderful as an angel in the twilight.





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